# THE CURE OF DISTRACTIONS IN Attending upon *GOD*:

In Several

# SERMONS

Preached from

1 Cor. 7. 35. *That you may attend upon the Lord without Distraction.*

By *NATHANAEL VINCENT*, M.A.
Minister of the Gospel.

Psal. 27. 8. *When thou saidst, seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek.*

אֲנִי תְפִלָּה

Ἐν τοῦτος ἴσθι.

*Deus non vocis, sed Cordis auditor.* Cypr.
*Primum argumentum compositæ mentis existimes posse consistere, & secum morari.* Seneca Epist. 2.

*LONDON*,
Printed for *Brabazon Aylmer*, at the *Three Pigeons* over against the *Royal-Exchange* in *Cornhill*, 1695.

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To the Truly Honourable

Sir WILLIAM ASHURST, Kt.

AND

*Alderman* of the City of *London.*

Much Honoured SIR,

I *Did not Addreſs to you when you were like the* Riſing Sun, *and made the* Chief Seat *in this City, where you were* deſervedly *placed, to* ſhine *with more than* ordinary Luſtre; *when you* diſcovered *and were* ſevere *againſt the* Works of Darkneſs; *and your* Influence *was ſo* benign *and kind, for the* Suſtentation *and* Benefit *of* London; *but now you have* run your Courſe ſo well, *and have* ſet *without the* leaſt Cloud; *nay, with* ſo much Clearneſs *and* Glory, *I make* this De-

dication *to you, desiring your serious Perusal of a* Treatise, *the Subject of which is of such* great importance. *And indeed now you have* quitted *the* Chair, *and have* less *of* publick Business *to manage, and may have* more leisure *to* retire into your Self, *and from Company, and from Civil Affairs*; *this* Cure of Distractions in Religious Duties, *knocks at your Door, the Author desiring it may be* helpful *to your* Meditations *and* Devotion.

*'Tis a great* Respect *and* Honour *that is due to the* God's on Earth, *so* Magistrates *are called, and* Inferiours *should apply to Them accordingly, with a great* sense *of their* distance. *With* what Reverence *then are we to approach* the Supream Majesty! *The* Lord of Hosts, *the* King of Glory! *Our* highest *Apprehensions are infinitely* below him. *And the best of Saints do rather* wish *to Worship him, than per-*

*form*

*form any thing that is* worthy *of the* Name *of* Worſhip.

*Among the many Faults in Holy Duties, there is* one *that will never be* quite mended *in* this World, *and that is* Diſtraction; *but yet* more *and* more help *may be ſtill attained againſt it: And* theſe Sermons *which I now preſent you with, I hope with a* Bleſſing from Heaven *may contribute ſomewhat, and be* ſucceſsful this way.

*If* Religious Duties *were but* well done, *every thing* elſe *would be* done *the* better; *for it is from* God alone *that we have* ability *to do as* we ought *in* any *matter whatſoever. The Lord gives* Wiſdom *and* Grace *moſt* liberally *to them who* moſt ſincerely *ſeek him. And ſuch as have* moſt help from God, *will* beſt *perform their Duty towards* Man; *and both* Church *and* State *will find them the* moſt uſeful Members. *Religion is certainly the* trueſt Policy. *The* Wiſdom of

this World, *says the Apostle*, and of the Princes of this World comes to nought, *but Godliness in* the power of it, *makes Men better in every* Capacity *and* Relation. *How does it* alter *and* amend Persons, Families, Nations, *where 'tis* encouraged *and* prevails! *Righteousness and Peace, Joy, and Love, are found to be the blessed effects of* true Religion! *It* tames *the* fierceness, *and subdues the* malignity *of* corrupt Nature! *And makes Man to look* something like *what he* was *in the* state of Innoceney!

*All that* wish well *to this* City *and* Nation, *must needs desire that* God *may be* better served, *and that* Men *by* his Service *may be* better'd. *How* happy should we be *if People were* all Righteous! *Violence* then would be no more heard in our Land, nor wasting and destruction within our Borders; our Walls would be called Salvation, *and* our *Gates* Praise,

*and*

*and* the Lord himself would be to us an everlasting Light, and our God our Glory!

*I wish that* all Lord Mayors *for the future may* follow your Example, *and endeavour to* suppress Wickedness, *and may never be* ashamed *of* Holiness, *which is the* Glory of *God*, *and is most* unreasonably *look'd upon as* matter of Disgrace *to* any Man. Sir! *You are descended from* Religious Ancestors, *and* Religion *is that which does* truly ennoble *your* Blood *and* Family. *An increase of* this Nobility *and of* all other Blessings, *is wisht to* your self *and* Yours. *By*,

Honoured SIR,

Your Most Humble Servant,

*Nathanael Vincent.*

# TO THE READER.

*Reader!*

IT is a Subject of the *higheſt conſequence*, and in which *all* are *concerned*, that I Diſcourſe of in this Treatiſe; and I deſign ſome *relief* againſt that which is the *general Complaint* of *ſerious Chriſtians*, who would fain offer to God more *Spiritual and well pleaſing* Sacrifices, but are hindred by the remaining *Sin* and *Vanity* of their own Minds. They are called indeed *the Habitations of God through the Spirit*; but theſe Habitations are *haunted* with *diſtracting* Thoughts, and *vain* Imaginations, to their great grief and diſturbance. The Work and Service of the God of Heaven, is the τὸ ἔργον, *principal buſineſs* every one has to do in this World; and though no Duties are to be ſlightly done to *Man*, which are done for the Lord's ſake; yet in attendance upon *himſelf*, and in thoſe Duties which more *immediately* we perform to *him*, an holy Awe becomes us; our Hearts ſhould be *immoveably fixed*, and we ſhould exert the *utmoſt Vigour* of our Spirits. To trifle with a Jealous God, whoſe All-ſeeing Eye ſtrictly obſerves the whole we do, and wherein ſoever we

we fail, is to *despise him to his Face*, and to act to the *great peril* of our *own Souls*.

*Our God*, says the Apostle, *is a consuming fire*; and *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the Sons of *Aaron*, found him so, to their cost and sorrow, when they *offer'd strange fire, such as he commanded them not*. We must do *what* God commands, and *as* he commands, else what we call our Religious Duties, will be look'd upon by *him* as *acts of Disobedience*.

The Mind of Man ever since the *first Man* parted from God, is notoriously fickle and wavering, being unsetled by Sin, it roves up and down the Earth from one Vanity to another; but how hardly is it brought *back to God*! And though it is engaged to approach near to him, yet if it be not narrowly watched, in the *twinkling of an Eye*, it starts back and is gone away from him. *To keep our Hearts with all diligence*, is our Duty, but they will not be held in from *wandring* by our most careful Custody. It is the Hand of that God alone, by which the *whole Universe* consists, and is kept from dissolution, that can fix the Mind of Man, and hinder its being distracted in his Service.

There is a great deal of Pains taken in the World to little purpose: *All things*, says *Solomon*, *are full of labour*, *Man cannot utter it*; and yet he affirms that there is *no profit under the Sun*. But 'tis lamentable to think that in the *Church*, there should be *so much labour in vain*. Distraction of Mind keeps the Heart away from God, and from the Duty that seems

ſeems to be performed to him; it hinders the ſtirring of holy Affections, the acting of ſaving Grace; and turns Religion into a meer σωματικὴ γυμνασία, *Bodily Exerciſe*: and how can that be profitable to the Soul, which is a great way off, and ſo little regards what is done? How can it be acceptable to God, who is a Spirit, and will be worſhipped *in Spirit and in Truth*?

The Church of *Rome* is for *implicit Faith*, for *blind Obedience*, and for *Worſhip in an unknown Tongue*. How diſtracted muſt that Worſhip needs be? How can the Peoples *Thoughts* be *intent* upon what they do not *underſtand*? Too many *Proteſtants* in their Devotions mind what *themſelves ſay*, as *little*, as if they did not underſtand the words they ſpake; and truly the latter ſin with greater aggravation, becauſe having means of better inſtruction, their Duties are no better performed.

The Cure of *Diſtraction* in Religious Services, is *very difficult*; ſome think *light of the Diſeaſe*, and imagine the Cure *needleſs*; others are diſcouraged from ſtriving againſt Diſtraction, as if it were *impoſſible* to *overcome* them, but nothing is too hard for the *great Phyſician*, he can heal the *Mind's Vanity*, bring the Heart into God's Preſence; *he* is able to *caſt down Imaginations*, and to hinder them from riſing again, and to bring Thoughts into *Captivity and Obedience*.

## *To the* READER.

A Sense of my own Wandrings in those Ordinances I administer, and engage in, has put me upon a *more serious study* how to prevent them. And I would be the *first* and *best* Follower my self, of that *Counsel*, which I give *to others*. And if the Lord is served with greater Attention and Spirituality; and if the Hearts of those who shall read this Treatise, are more than ever in the Work of God, and *more benefited* by doing it, the *great End* is obtained, which is designed by

*Nathanael Vincent.*

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THE

# THE CURE OF DISTRACTIONS IN ATTENDING upon GOD.

1 Cor. 7. 35. lat. part.
*That you may Attend upon the Lord without Diſtraction.*

THE Apoſtle *Paul* had a great and fervent *zeal* for the *honour* of God, that he might *have* ſuch *attendance* as he Commands; and which moſt rightfully appertains to a *Lord* ſo *great*, and *good*; unto whom, both Heaven and Earth do owe all Service

and Obedience. The Apoſtle alſo manifeſts an *extraordinary care* of the *Souls* of Men; that they might not fail to *give* that Attendance which is enjoyned them as their *Duty*: and is alſo their *advantage*, *honour*, and *ſecurity*. The *thoughts*, the *hearts*, the *endeavours* of all, ſhould run this way; as to a matter of the *mightieſt importance* and concernment. *Here* if we are undiſtractedly ſerious and ſincere, all is ſafe; and that both throughout time, and to Eternity. But if Attendance upon God be either *neglected*, or *negligently given*, though we are never ſo intent and induſtrious about other things, our *Souls* and *all our labour* will be *loſt* together.

In this Chapter a little before the Text, the Apoſtle admoniſhes the *Corinthian* Saints of the *ſhortneſs of time*, of the *tranſitorineſs* of this *preſent World*; and then informs them, what *kind of Attendance* upon *himſelf*, God required, and expected from them.

1. His Admonition concerning *Time* is *ſtartling*, Καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος, Time is contracted to a little ſpace. An alluſion here is to Sails, which are no longer ſpread, but bound up when the Ship is juſt come to the Harbour. The word συστέλλω alſo ſignifies to *wind up a Body* in Grave-clothes,

that

that it may be fit for the *Sepulchre.* Time is thus ready to be wound up continually, and to be buried as it were in Eternity: compared with this, 'tis but as a drop to the whole Ocean: and this very *drop is ever waſting.* Time is a ſhort thing; in a continual Flux; and every moment growing ſhorter. Other things are of the leſs value, becauſe they can be enjoyed but a little while: the Epithet *Temporal*, or *laſting only for a ſeaſon*, being added to the greateſt Wealth, the higheſt Pleaſures, nay, to *Diadems* and *Kingdoms*, makes them *fall* in the *eſteem* of a *diſcerning Judgment.* But the *worth* of Time is *enhanced* by the *brevity* of it. The day of Salvation, the accepted time in which *we*, and *our attendance* upon God, may be *accepted of*, cannot extend beyond the limits of the time of life. *Now* we muſt make Peace with God, work out our own Salvation, and provide for Eternity; this muſt be done *now* or *never:* There is not a *moment* of time but is *too good* to be *loſt*; there is Service and *work enough* to do in it: and to *loſe all our time*, is *everlaſtingly to loſe our ſelves.*

2. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of the *Worlds tranſitorineſs*, χῆμα τῦ κόσμυ παράγει, the *faſhion of the World paſſes away.* Mammon is

but a ſorry Maſter; and really is unworthy of that numerous attendance, and mighty reſpect which is given to him. Sin has made *man fooliſh*, and the *world vain*. And 'tis an undeniable argument of Man's Folly that a vain World is ſo much minded; which is ſo apt to fade and change. As *Scenes* in a *Comedy* or *Tragedy* alter, and quickly the laſt Act comes; and the Play is at an end: ſo this World is continually varying. Now there appears one, and a little after, quite and clean *another Face* of things. The Face of the Sky is not more mutable, than the ſtate of humane Affairs. And thus 'tis likely to be to the World's End, when *the Earth, and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up.*

I borrow a ſimilitude from what I am far from approving.

That *God* whom Chriſtians attend upon is *unchangeable*, and ſo is his *love to them*; and the *inheritance* they expect hereafter is *incorruptible, and fadeth not away*. But they themſelves are *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* in this *World*; and ſhould behave themſelves as Paſſengers that are travelling towards a *better World*. And as for their Enjoyments by the way, they ſhould *love* them, as being about to *leave* them. Joy ſhould be moderate in the fruition of them;

them; and when they are taken away, Sorrow ſhould not be exceſſive, nor tranſgreſs the Bounds of Grace and Reaſon.

3. The Apoſtle, as a Man *well acquainted* with *the Court of Heaven, directs Believers Attendance upon the Lord*, who dwells and reigns there. He is very careful not to *caſt a Snare upon the* Corinthians; nor to impoſe upon Conſcience what God does not. *Papal Authority* is Audacious and *Antichriſtian*, and makes bold to Command, and that upon the higheſt Penalty, what the Lord never required. But the Apoſtle abhors ſpiritual *Uſurpation:* He would have all obſerve *what God called them to*; and in every condition to *abide with God*, and to *attend upon the Lord without Diſtraction.*

In the words take notice,

1. Of *the Lord* with whom we have to do. The *Eyes of Servants are to their Maſters*; and the Eyes of Worſhippers ſhould be to the Lord whom they adore; and if they had a greater *reſpect to this holy One*, what an influence would it have upon their Lives and Services! The word Κυριος, *Lord*, in the *New* Teſtament, is put for *Jehovah* in the *Old.* The God whom Chriſtians acknowledge, is the Lord *Jehovah*,

*hovah*, who has his Being of himſelf, and has Dominion over all.

2. Obſerve what this Lord requires and calls for, and that is *attendance* upon him. The Greek word which the Holy Ghoſt uſes is very ſignificant and emphatical, εὐπρόσεδρον, implies, *acceſs* unto God, and *abiding* with him; and being *fit for*, and *well-pleaſed* with, both the one and the other.

3. *Who are to attend* upon the Lord? All Men do owe Homage and Service to him; which is their Honour and Intereſt to pay: But thoſe who are his *own Children and People*, are by *ſpecial obligations and favour* called to this *duty* and *priviledge* of attending upon their God; and they have a new Principle and Nature which inclines them to it.

4. Here is a direction as *to the manner of attending* on the Lord, it muſt be ἀπερισπάστως, *without diſtraction*. *Plutarch* calls that *Studium ſapientiæ*, ἀπερίσπαστον, the ſtudy of Wiſdom without Diſtraction, when nothing is able to call away the Mind, and make it ceaſe that ſtudy. In attending upon God, there muſt be *intention* in the *mind*; a *full bent* of the *heart*; with *ſtrength* of *affection and deſire*; not to be diverted, much leſs to be extinguiſhed.

ed. All *other buſineſs*, comparatively, muſt be lookt upon as *trivial*; attendance upon the Lord muſt be with the greateſt ſeriouſneſs.

I raiſe *three Doctrines* from the words.

Firſt, *The Children of Men ought to attend upon God*; this the Text plainly ſuppoſes.

Secondly, *In attending upon God we ſhould look upon him as the Lord; and ſerve him accordingly.*

Thirdly, *Attendance upon the Lord ſhould be without Diſtraction.*

Doct. I. I begin with the firſt of theſe Doctrines: *The Children of Men ought to attend upon God.* The Heaven of Heavens is his Throne; and he is attended on by *thouſands and ten thouſands* of glorious and holy Ones, *who miniſter unto him, and ſtand before him.* And yet upon Earth, which is his Footſtool, he calls for Attendance too; for he *rejoices in the habitable parts of the Earth, and his delights are with the Sons of Men*; who underſtand him and themſelves ſo well, as to ſeek after him. He requires continually to be waited on, *Hoſ.* 12. 6. *Therefore turn thou to thy God, keep Mercy and Judgment, and wait on thy God continu-*

*ally.* Injunctions to wait are reiterated, with the encouraging promiſe of Divine Aid and ſtrengthning Grace, *Pſal.* 27.14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good Courage, he ſhall ſtrengthen thy Heart; wait I ſay on the Lord.* Pſal. 37.34. *Wait on the Lord, and keep his way*; this way is true; walking in it, is holy and ſafe; and the end is Peace.

In the handling of this Doctrine I ſhall

Firſt, Shew you what is *ſuppoſed* in *Man's Attendance upon God.*

Secondly, I ſhall tell you *what is implied* in this *Attendance.*

Thirdly, I ſhall ſpeak of *ſeveral ſorts of Attending* upon the Lord.

Fourthly, I ſhall aſſign the *Reaſons* why the Children of Men *ought to give their Attendance* upon God.

Fifthly, *Make Application.*

In the firſt place, I am am to ſhew you what is ſuppoſed in Man's Attendance upon God. There are ſeveral *pre-requiſites* unto this; for Man is not eaſily perſwaded to this Duty; though the performance of it prove never ſo beneficial to him. Now that there may be this Attendance:

1. Man

1. Man muſt *firmly believe that there is a God*, Heb. 11. 6. *But without Faith 'tis impoſſible to pleaſe him; for he that cometh unto God muſt believe that He is.* As God is *to everlaſting*, ſo he is *from everlaſting*. If he had not *ever been*, and that of himſelf, he *would never have been*; neither could *any thing* elſe ever have had a Being. Creatures Exiſtence ſuppoſes there is a Creator; and Attendance upon God ſuppoſes there is a God to be attended on. The ſtronger the Aſſent to this, is, the greater will be the care to underſtand how the Attendance may be acceptable. The *Being* of a *God*, there are few that deny in *words*; but there are abundance who *deny him in their works*; even among them *who profeſs to know him*, Tit. 1. 16. And being ſo *fooliſh* as to ſay *in their Hearts there is no God:* No wonder that with their hearts they refuſe to ſeek him.

Man ſhould look upward, and ſee how the *Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy-work*, Pſal. 19. 1. The *Viſible Creation* is not more *obvious* to the *Eye*, than the *Eternal Power and Godhead* of him who made all things, is *clearly* to be *ſeen* by the *Mind* of Man, *Rom.* 1. 20. And if Man will but look into his own καθορᾶται.

Heart,

Heart, he may find this Truth deeply ingraven there, that *God is*; therefore the Apoſtle ſpeaks thus of the *Gentiles*, who had only the Light of Nature, *Rom.*1.19. for *that which may be known of God, is manifeſt in them*; *for God hath ſhewed it unto them.* Let not any go about to *obliterate* this Truth concerning the Being of a God, but undoubtingly credit it; for 'tis the *firſt Stone* in the *Foundation* of all truly Religious Service and Obedience.

2. Man muſt have a *ſenſe* that he *had his Being from God, and was made for him*; and truly he is made ſuch a Creature, that he will never be quite unmade, ſo as to become nothing. He is capable of knowing and ſerving his Maker; and enjoying him for ever; God has made all Men for himſelf; and ſome way or other he *will ſecure* his own *Honour*, and have *Glory* from the *very worſt*. But as for his own People, he has *formed*, *bought*, and *new made* them *for himſelf, that they might ſhew forth his Praiſe*, Iſa. 43. 21. Man ſhould Eye the Hand that made him, and the End for which he was made. Our Bodies will be found a curious piece of Divine Workmanſhip, if the contexture, variety, and uſe of their parts are conſidered: But though our Fleſh is of God's Forming, yet

in

in a more immediate manner, he is called the *Father of our Spirits.* And wherefore have our Souls a thinking Faculty, but that God may be thought of? Wherefore have we *Memories,* but that *our Creator from our Youth* may be *remembred?* And if we live to *Gray-hairs,* he in *no wiſe* is to be *forgotten.* Wherefore are we capable of loving, deſiring, and taking delight; but that God may be the chief Object of theſe Affections? In *him we live, and move, and have our Being,* Acts 17. 28. that we might *live to him, move* according to *his Will,* and *be* indeed his *Servants.*

3. Man muſt be perſwaded that *God is rightfully his Ruler, and has given him a Law and Commandments, by which he is to be governed.* Mammon and Satan are meer *Uſurpers,* and where they *reign* they *ruin.* The *evil One* is to be *reſiſted,* not *obeyed;* and Man was made to have *Dominion over the Creatures,* not to be *enſlaved* by them. But God is Man's Sovereign by Right, and may lay upon Man what Commands *he pleaſes,* but has given them *none* but what are *holy, juſt and good,* Rom. 7. 12. And the better theſe are obeyed, Man becomes more holy, juſt, and good himſelf, and partakes more of the *Divine Nature.* Would we attend upon God? We muſt have reſpect

ſpect unto his Commands. *David* plainly intimates the *gain* of Obedience; when he ſays, *more are they to be eſteemed than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold.* He ſignifies the pleaſure of Obedience, when he adds, *ſweeter alſo than the hony, and the hony comb,* Pſal. 19. 10.

4. Man muſt be convinced, *that by ſin he has departed from God, and has juſtly incurred his diſpleaſure.* The *natural diſtance* between God and Man as a *Creature*, muſt ever remain: God is, and will be for ever, *infinitely above*, and *ſuperiour* even to *thoſe* that are in *Heaven*: he *humbles himſelf to behold the things that are there*, Pſal. 113. 6. But the *moral diſtance* that is between God and Man, or the *enmity* that Sin is the cauſe of, may be made to ceaſe. When Man attends upon God, he ſhould come with deep ſenſe how he has provoked him: that he is *by Nature a Child of Wrath*, Eph. 2. 3. and in his practiſe a Rebel; and as he has *acted like one*, ſo he *deſerves* to be *dealt* with as an *Enemy*. When the *Syrians* came to the King of *Iſrael*, they *had Sackcloth on their Loins, and Ropes on their Heads*, 1 Kings 20. 32. They had newly been in Arms againſt him; and now they declare how ill they deſerved to be treated by him. For *offenders* to approach unto

to God without *any trouble* for their *offences*, 'tis not to *Attend* upon him, but to *Affront* him. Thoſe are his own words, *Wo to them for they have fled from me; deſtruction unto them, becauſe they have tranſgreſſed againſt me*, Hoſ. 7. 13. And hear the Language of the penitent Church, Lam. 5. 16. *The Crown is fallen from our Head; wo to us that we have ſinned.* When we come for Mercy, we muſt be ſenſible that *Mercy is undeſerved*, and *that confuſion of Face belongs to us*, Dan. 9. 8. A penitential Acknowledgment there ſhould be, *that we have been fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived; that we have ſerved divers Luſts and Pleaſures*; and in our ſelves are ſo *hateful* to God, that we are unworthy to be admitted into the number of his Attendants.

5. Man muſt *hear the Call of God; to return to him; and to Obedience and Duty.* The *Angels* that *ſinned were not ſpared*, nor called to attend upon God in order to their recovery after their Apoſtaſie. Indeed we find *Satan* an Intruder *among the Sons of God, who came to preſent themſelves before the Lord*, Job 1. 6. but it was not to beg Grace for himſelf; his Chains of Darkneſs hindered his Hope of finding any; he comes as an Accuſer of *Job*, and with a deſire of a Permiſſion to do him a Miſchief.

chief. But Man, though departed from God, is called to come backagain, *Hoſ.* 14. 1. *O* Iſrael, *return to the Lord thy God, for thou haſt fallen by thy Iniquity.* Man is *ſought after* as well as *ſaved*, or ſought that he may be ſaved: And if the Lord did not ſeek him, but leave him to his own Imagination and Inclination, his *Imaginations* are ſo *vain*, his *Inclinations* ſo *perverſe* and *wicked*, he would never ceaſe *going aſtray*, till he *died without Wiſdom*. The Call of God is loud and earneſt, that Man would turn from his Diſobedience, and do his Duty, Prov. 8. 4. *Unto you, O Men, I call, and my voice is to the Sons of Man.* Prov. 1. 23. *Turn you at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* Prov. 8. 34. *Bleſſed is the Man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the poſts of my doors.*

6. Man muſt *look upon God as acceſſible in Chriſt.* When *Adam* fell into the firſt Tranſgreſſion, ſhewing a Contempt of God, and of his Covenant, and the Life that was there promiſed; he was turned out of Paradiſe, and *a flaming Sword* was placed to *hinder* his *re-entring*, and *acceſs to the Tree of Life*. Life was impoſſible to be had by the firſt Covenant; therefore he and his Faith were directed to the *promiſed*

*miſed Seed*, who ſhould *bruiſe the Serpents head*; and in time would be *manifeſted* to *deſtroy the Works of the Devil*, 1 John 3. 8. This *Work* of the Devil was *Sin*, whereby Man had departed from his Maker: Now *Chriſt* the ſecond *Adam*, *ſuffered once for Sins, the Juſt for the Unjuſt*, that he might *bring Man to God*, and make up the Breach that Sin had made between them, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. As God is but *One*, ſo there is *but One Mediator between God and Men, the Man Chriſt Jeſus*; *Who gave himſelf a Ranſom for all*, 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. no acceſs to God by any other: But ſays the Apoſtle, In Chriſt *Jeſus our Lord we have boldneſs, and acceſs with confidence by the Faith of him*, Eph. 3. 12. Under the Old Teſtament there was but one Temple, one Altar for Burnt-offering and Sin-offering to make an Atonement: An Heathen thought it a *diſhonour* to the *Lord Jehovah*; that *Hezekiah* had *taken away his high Places and his Altars, and had commanded* Judah *and* Jeruſalem *to Worſhip before one Altar*, 2 Chron. 32. 12. But the myſtery and meaning of this was, that Jeſus Chriſt alone is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; *and that no Man cometh to the Father but by him.*

7. Man

7. Man must *plainly discern his Ignorance and Impotence to give a right Attendance upon God, without the Direction and Aid of his Word and Spirit.* Nay, as Man does want both *Skill* and *Strength* to serve the Lord, so he has *no Will* to it; there is an *Indisposition* and an *Ill disposition* in him; which plainly shews that the Light and Grace of the Word and Spirit is of absolute necessity, unto an Attendance upon God that is acceptable to him. When Man is *off from God*, and betakes *himself to himself* in Matters of Religion, he *rangeth infinitely*, like a Sea-faring Man who has lost his Compass in a Mist, moving swiftly but to no purpose. Now there shall be *more words* than that which is *written*, more *Articles* than what *God* has put into our *Creed*, more *Commands* than the Law-giver ever gave; nay, more *Gods* and more *Mediators* than *One*: Mans Invention will be fruitlesly Fruitful, and himself restless and endless in his own ways. We should see our need of Instruction and Help from the Spirit of the Lord: Both Light and Liberty, Strength and Livelines in all Holy Duties, is from Him.

'Tis *through the Son* as *Mediator*, and 'tis *by the Spirit* as our *Helper*, that we *have*

*Acces*

*acceſs to the Father*, Eph. 2. 18. The Apoſtle acknowledges, *We know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought; but the Spirit helps our infirmities*; the *holy* and *gracious deſires* of the Saints, are the *breathings* of *this ſpirit* in them; acceptable Petitions that will find Audience, are of his drawing up, and enditing. *He maketh interceſſion for the Saints according to the Will of God*, Rom. 8. 26, 27. *He* is the *inſtructer* of *all* thoſe who are *taught to profit*. Ordinances, Gifts, Adminiſtrations which are ſo uſeful, are from the Spirit, and the benefit and ſucceſs of them is owing to him; his Aid is earneſtly to be implored, and thankfully to be accepted. Preparation to Attendance upon God is neceſſary, *Pſal.* 10. 17. *Thou wilt prepare their Heart, thou wilt cauſe thine Ear to hear*; and this preparation is the work of the Spirit.

8. Man muſt not *doubt*, but be *thoroughly perſwaded* that God is ready to be *found* of ſuch as attend upon him, and *is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, Heb. 11. 6. Satan *affects* to be the *Repreſenter* of God to Man; and he repreſents him *contrary ways*; and *both* are *falſe*, and indeed *miſrepreſentations*; from *ſecure Souls*, he does endeavour to hide *the Wrath* of God, his *Holineſs*, *Juſtice* and *Jealouſie*, that he may

*heighten presumption*; from *awakened and humble* Hearts, he does endeavour to *conceal* his *Mercy and Grace in Christ*, that he may *kill* their *Hope*, and *discourage* them from *engaging* in the *work* of God. But 'tis Wisdom in Man to hear what the Lord speaks of himself; for he best knows himself, and the Revelations he makes of himself are most certainly true. Now as he has told us, that he will *wound the Head of his Enemies*; and he accounts those Enemies *who go on still in their trespasses*, Psal. 68. 21. so he has assured us that he is *good and ready to forgive* those who are troubled because they have offended, and see their need of pardon; and *he is plenteous in Mercy unto all that in Truth do call upon him*, Psal. 68. 5.

'Tis a mighty encouragement to attend upon God, when we *see the door of Hope standing open*, and that the Lord *takes pleasure* in those who *fear* his displeasure, and *hope in his mercy* together. *Psal.* 147. 11. The *Tables of the Law* were put into the *Ark*, and the *mercy-seat* was *above it*; a plain intimation, that the Lord who sits upon this mercy-seat, will not enter into *Judgment with his Servants*, nor *mark the iniquities*; but be *merciful to the unrighteousness* of them that *turn* to him; this

should

ſhould raiſe Hope in dejected Spirits, and cauſe it to abound. *Pſal.* 130. 7, 8. *Let* Iſrael *hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is Mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption, and he ſhall redeem* Iſrael *from all his Iniquities.*

9. Man muſt *not think to divide his Service between God and Mammon.* Our Lord himſelf tells us, that *no Man can ſerve two Maſters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other; ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* To mind the *World* as if it were the *moſt deſirable* thing, and to *ſerve* the *Lord*, only *for the World's ſake*; this is *hateful earthlimindedneſs*, and *Hypocriſie.* When the Children of *Iſrael* aſſembled themſelves before God, only for *Corn and Wine*; their *Cries* were but *howlings* in his Ears. *Hoſ.* 7. 14. If we would attend upon God, we muſt *come out from the World.* Conformity *to the World*, and *walking after the courſe of it*, muſt ceaſe. The moſt deſirable good things of it muſt be contemned in compariſon with God, and the *better and enduring ſubſtance.* We ſhall never *look* and aim at, ſo as to obtain the things that *are unſeen and eternal*; unleſs the Eye be ſhut againſt the things that are *ſeen and temporal*, 2 Cor. 4. 18.

Not but that Attenders upon God *may* and *ought to mind their ſecular buſineſs* which their *particular Callings* lead them to. Chriſtians are cautioned againſt *idleneſs* as great *diſorderlineſs*; and are *commanded and exhorted by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt with quietneſs to work, and to Eat their own Bread*, 2 Theſ. 3. 11, 12. This notwithſtanding muſt ever be remembred; that the things of this World are to be regarded ſo *far as God has commanded*, that they muſt *be begg'd of him*, they muſt be *kept, uſed, and improved for him*; they muſt *not be liked for themſelves*, but ſo far as *God is enjoyed with them*, and *in them*. And in the greateſt abundance of them, this ſhould be the *Heart's* Language, which came from the Heart and Mouth of *Luther*; *Noli his ſatiari*; Lord *I will not be put off with ſuch things as theſe!* The *Lord is my Portion ſaith my Soul*, and I have *looked* and *longed*, and *wait for thy Salvation!*

10. Man muſt *conſent to caſt away whatever may ſeparate between the Lord and him.* And what *that is*, the Prophet plainly tells us, Iſa. 59. 1, 2. *Behold the Lord's Hand is not ſhortned, that it cannot ſave; neither his Ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your Iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God; and your Sins have hid his Face from you,*

*you, that he will not hear.* Separation from God is the Hell of Hell; and this Hell upon Earth, Sin is the cauſe of. Sin is that which provokes the Lord to be *angry* with Man, and with *his Soul to hate him*; to *behold him afar off:* ſo that he is not admitted unto his *Favour*, or unto *Fellowſhip* and *Communion* with him. To *talk* of Fellowſhip with God, and to *walk in this darkneſs* of Sin, is to *lie* to others, and to *deceive* our ſelves. This *middle Wall of Partition* muſt be thrown down, elſe there can be no *drawing nigh* to God. Jam. 4. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you: Cleanſe your hands ye ſinners, purifie your hearts ye double-minded.* The Hand muſt not *practiſe* and *work* wickedneſs; the Heart muſt not *regard* and *like* it. The more the Heart is deſirous of Purity, the fitter it is to attend upon the Lord, to ſerve him and to ſee him. Therefore you read *Mat.* 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God*; and 2 *Cor.* 6. 17, 18. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my Sons and Daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.*

In the ſecond place, I am to tell you what is *implied* in Man's Attendance upon God. This Attendance is of large extent, and takes in *all the Service* he Commands: In Scripture 'tis expreſſed ſometimes by *following* of God, ſometimes by *waiting* upon the Lord; and in the Text by *Attending*. I ſhall explain what this is in ſeveral particulars.

1. Attending upon God implies *enquiring of God*. He is μόνῳ σοφῷ, *only Wiſe*, the *Father of Lights*, from whom all *true Wiſdom*, and *every good and perfect gift* comes down, *Jam.* 1.17. The *Wiſdom of this World*, and of *the Princes of this World*, however 'tis magnified as the moſt *profound Policy*, cannot ſecure them that are moſt excellent this way, but *they* and their *Wiſdom come to nought*, and periſh together; but ſpiritual Wiſdom which is hidden from the *prudent of the World*, and is the eſpecial gift of God, is *ordained to the Glory* of them that have it, 1 *Cor.* 2.6,7. Wiſdom to *Salvation* and *everlaſting Glory*; deſerves the *name* of Wiſdom, *ſound* Wiſdom it may well be called. *Prov.* 2. 6,7, *For the Lord giveth Wiſdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and underſtanding, he layeth up ſound Wiſdom for the Righteous, he is*

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*a Buckler to them that walk uprightly.*

Our inquiry muſt be of God for Wiſdom of this Nature. He *gives it to all* that deſire and *ask* it, and that *liberally without upbraiding*, Jam. 1. 5. He upbraids not any with their *former hatred of knowledge*, or *contempt of Wiſdom*; neither does he upbraid them with their *natural dulneſs* and *unaptneſs* to learn, but both inſtruction, and alſo the very heart and ability to receive it, are from him, *Prov.* 20. 12. *The hearing Ear and the ſeeing Eye, the Lord hath made even both of them.* The Pſalmiſt thus deſired to attend upon God, *all the days of his life*, that he *might enquire in his Temple*, Pſal. 27. 4. They are well counſelled, and are led ſafe to Glory; who have *God to be their guide even unto death*, and ſtill *follow on to know the Lord.*

2. Attending upon God implies *hearkning, and heeding what God ſpeaks.* Pſal. 85. 8. *I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak*; and what Attention does *ſuch a ſpeaker* deſerve, who ſpeaks *from Heaven*; and whoſe Word ſhews the way to *Heaven!* who *ſpeaks peace*, and publiſhes glad-tidings of great Salvation! When *Lydia* her *heart was opened*, that ſhe *attended unto thoſe things which were ſpoken of* Paul, *Acts* 16. 14. She heard *Paul's* Voice, but believed the *Lord*

*ſpake by him to her*; and ſhe regarded the meſſage accordingly. We attend upon God in the Miniſtry of the Word, when our Eye looks beyond the Miniſtry unto the Lord himſelf; and our Ear is attentive that we may underſtand his Truths which are to be believed, his Precepts that are to be obeyed. Now the Word comes with a Divine Power and Efficacy, when God is heard ſpeaking in the Word, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 13. *For this cauſe alſo thank we God without ceaſing; becauſe when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of Men, but, as it is in truth the Word of God; which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe.* It concerns us to take heed *what* we hear, and *how*. We ſhould be forward to be made acquainted with *God's Truth* and *Will*; and *neither ſhould be held in unrighteouſneſs*; for to hear what God ſpeaks, and not to mind it, but to act quite contrary, is diſobedience with an high aggravation.

3 Attending upon God implies *returning and yielding our ſelves unto God.* Man is naturally Contentious, and ſtruggles hard about this point; and will not yield that *God ſhould direct and rule*; and that 'tis reaſonable, that *he* in *all things ſhould ſubmit and obey.* Man till he is inſtructed and

and enlightned from above, will be ſtill *murmuring* and *diſputing* againſt his Duty, and will not come to God, though God is *Light*, and can ſhine into his Mind; though *Divine Goodneſs* can *ſatiate* Man's Soul, though the Lord has *ſupream* and *ſufficient Authority* to Command the *Conſcience*, and to lay the *whole Man* under *obligation* to Obedience. But when we attend upon God indeed, we hearken to his Call to return, and we *return at his Call.*

There cannot be a right Attendance without ſincere Converſion; and this Converſion is Man's yielding of himſelf to his Lord. *Rom.* 6. 12,13. *Let not ſin reign in your mortal Bodies, that ye ſhould obey it in the Luſts thereof, neither yield ye your Members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto Sin; but yield ye your ſelves unto God, as thoſe that are alive from the Dead, and your Members as inſtruments of Righteouſneſs unto God.* The *Body* muſt be yielded, that the *Holy Ghoſt* may *Conſecrate* it to the Lord's Service; that Eyes and Mouth, and Hands and Feet, and all may be at *God's Beck*, and ready to fulfill his Pleaſure. And eſpecially the *Heart muſt be yielded*, nay, the *whole heart*, elſe returning is but *feigned.* Jer. 3. 10. *Her treacherous Siſter* Judah, *hath not returned to me with her*

*her whole heart, but feignedly ſaith the Lord.* The Soul muſt conſent to have *all its powers renewed and ſanctified*, that with them *all* it may give Attendance upon God; the Heart without any reſervation muſt yield, that God ſhould *work out* of it whatever is *offenſive*, that he ſhould *work in it that which is pleaſing in his ſight.*

4. Attending upon God implies *ſeeking and deſiring after God.* Iſa. 26. 9. *With my Soul have I deſired thee in the Night, yea with my Spirit will I ſeek thee early.* The *bent* of the very Soul was towards God, and the deſires are kept up in vehemency both *Night and Day.* The Lord *humbles himſelf to behold things done in Heaven*; yet he *looks down upon the Children of Men upon Earth, to ſee if there be any that underſtand and ſeek him.* And if he *ſeeks after* theſe *ſeekers*, how *ready* is he to be *found* of them! The Command is, that we ſhould *ſeek the Lord and his ſtrength, and his Face evermore*, Pſal. 105. 4. God is to be ſought unto for *himſelf*, when the *all-ſufficient Jehovah* gives *himſelf* to any; he gives *infinitely more* than if he gave them *many thouſand ſuch Worlds* as *this is.* His *ſtrength* is of abſolute neceſſity, to *ſecure* us from *evil*, and to *aſſiſt* us in the *doing of good*; and the *ſhining of his Face* makes our *work*

*eaſie*

*easie* and pleasant, it makes our *Life*, and even *Death* it self *comfortable*. No wonder therefore, when God said, *Seek ye my Face*; one of his Attendants heard presently, as the Eccho answers the Voice, said, *Thy Face Lord will I seek*, Psal. 27.8. To seek to *any else* is *vain*; 'tis seeking for *Water* in a *broken Cistern* that can hold none. Men of *low degree*, though never so great a *multitude*, are *vanity*; and Men of *highest degree are a ly*, Psal. 62.9. But God's Power, Mercy and Truth are an evident proof that he is forward and sufficient to *satiate the Souls of all*, that charge their Souls to *wait only upon him*, and to have *their expectations from him*.

5. Attending upon God implies *waiting upon him in his own House and Sanctuary*. Every Christian's *House* should be an *House of Prayer*; but the place of *publick assembling to Worship* should be highly *prized*, and *frequented* for the *work sake* that is performed there. The *living*, the *true*, the *eternal God* is here *publickly* owned and acknowledged, and so is the *only Mediator Jesus*, as also the *Holy Ghost*; whose Aid and Grace is all in all, as to the *efficacy* and *success* of those *Ordinances* which are administred. Saints that have *seen God's Power and Glory in his Sanctuary*; it is no marvel

marvel that their *Souls thirst for God, for the living God*; and that's the Language of their Hearts, *When shall we come and appear before God*, Psal. 42. 2. As the *Sanctuary* was *next* to the *holiest of all*, so the *House of God on Earth*, is as it were, the *Suburbs* of the *City of God in Heaven*. The Sanctuary is the place where the *Light* of *holy* and *heavenly Doctrine shines*. Here the Psalmist *understood the end of the ungodly*, and that all their *prosperity* was but a *Dream* and *Image*, being abused by themselves, to further and hasten their destruction; for they are quickly *cast down* from their *greatest height*, and *brought into Desolation as in a moment, and utterly consumed with Terrors*, Psal. 73. 17, 18, 19. Here also he understood *how good God is to Israelites indeed*; when he does *afflict* them; his Rod *guides* them, *purges* their Hearts; he upholds them with one hand, when he corrects them with another; he makes *earthly things* more *contemptible* in their Eyes, and sets their Affections more upon himself, who is their *Portion for ever*. In the Sanctuary Believers are quickned, strengthened, comforted and settled: And this *one thing they desire of the Lord, and that they seek after, that they may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of their life,*

that

*that they may behold the Beauty of the Lord*, his Holiness and Grace in Christ, with the admirable Harmony of all his Attributes; and that they may perpetually be *enquiring in his Temple*; until being guided unto Death, and brought safe to Glory, they are past all danger, *Psal.* 27. 4.

6. Attending upon God implies *not only keeping the way of his Ordinances and Institutions, but minding his Dispensations, and the manner of his dealing with us.* The Ordinances of the Gospel are *from Heaven*, and not *of Men.* Men have no *right* to *institute*, who have no *power* to *bless.* Mens Inventions in Religion, though often followed with great eagerness, are found unprofitable and vain to them that have been Zealous for them. But the Ordinances which the Lord himself has appointed, he is ready to *own* and *make effectual* to them that attend upon him in the use of them: so that they shall have reason to say, they *have sought the Lord and have found him*, and have *tasted and seen that he is gracious.* Ordinances are Feasts with which Saints are entertained, called by the Prophet, *Feasts of fat things full of Marrow, and of Wine on the Lees well refined*, Isa. 25. 6. And the People of God are so strengthned, revived and delighted, and have such sensible

ſible Communion with him, as that they ſpeak out their Joy and Satisfaction, *v.* 9. *Lo this is our God, and we have waited for him, he will ſave us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his Salvation.* Thoſe are dangerouſly pufft up with Pride and Self-conceit, that think themſelves above *Ordinances*; and 'tis not a commendable Humility for them that deſire the ſpiritual Benefit of Ordinances, to imagine that *Ordinances are above them.* They are in no wiſe to be neglected; for they are the *golden Pipes*, Zach. 4. 12. which convey the Grace of the Spirit, compared to Oyl, into the Hearts of Men.

And as Attenders upon God are found in the way of his Ordinances, ſo they *obſerved diligently God's dealing with them.* They take notice how he *looks* upon them, whether there are *Smiles*, or *Frowns* in his Face; they regard what God ſpeaks, whether it be by way of Counſel, Caution, Rebuke, or Comfort; they heed what the Spirit ſays to them, and what Communications of Grace are vouchſafed. They are attentive to *regard the works of the Lord, and to conſider the operation of his hands.* Does he *afflict?* they turn to him that ſmites them, and deſire to be more

*fully*

*fully instructed*, and more *thoroughly purged*, Isa. 27. 9. Does he *load* them with *Benefits*? they are affected with his *loving-kindness*, and sensible how *obligations* grow *stronger* to *praise* and *please* him.

7. Attending upon God implies *expecting all from him*. From this one Fountain flow the Streams of *all sorts* of *Blessings*. In our Father's House there is *Bread enough, and to spare*; and how many soever are received and attend there, there is *room for more*; and not only room, but Entertainment. The Apostle though he was as *having nothing*, yet had such a *confident expectation* from God, as if he had *all things in possession*. 2 Cor. 6. 10. *as having nothing and yet possessing all things*. He assures the believing *Philippians*, that *God would supply all their needs according to his Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus*, Phil. 4. 19. The Psalmist in danger and *calamity*, betakes himself to the *mercy of God*, and the *shadow of his Wings for refuge*, and cries unto him *as the most High, who performed all things for him*, Psal. 57. 1, 2. Who questions whether the Sun be full of Light? whether the Ocean abound with Water? Much less reason is there to question God's Power and Will to answer the expectations of his People that attend upon him. It is his

pleasure

pleaſure that they ſhould *wait* upon him *for every thing*; and *knock at his door*, whatever they have to ask. *Abounding in hope* is acceptable to God, and will not iſſue in diſappointment. Therefore ſays *David*, Pſal. 71. 14. *But I will hope continually, and will yet praiſe thee more and more.*

8. Attending upon God implies *readineſs to do whatever he Commands*; and to engage at his *bidding* in *any* Service. *Nominal* Attendants will cry *Lord, Lord*; but *real* ones will *do the things which he ſays*. There are an innumerable company of *Angels* who *excel in ſtrength*, who wait on God, and thoſe *do his Commandments, hearkning to the Voice of his Word*, Pſal. 103. 20. That they may fulfill their Maker's Pleaſure, *they miniſter to them that ſhall be Heirs of Salvation*, Heb. 1. 14. Attendance includes a diſpoſition to yield Obedience. 'Tis thus expreſſed *Pſal.* 119. 48. *My Hands will I lift up to thy Commandments which I have loved.* The *lifting up the Hands*, ſhews a *forwardneſs to receive* whatever Command God ſhall give; and a readineſs to *ſet about the doing* whatever he *requires*. That's becoming Language, *Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth*; and he that is *truly a Servant*, will act according to what he hears his Lord ſpeaking; and

and he will not give back, though he is put upon the *hardeſt* and *hotteſt* Service. *Abraham* roſe *early in the Morning* to obey God's Command, to *offer up his Son* Iſaac. And the *Lord ſware to him by himſelf*, becauſe he *had not with-held his Son, his only Son from him; that in bleſſing he would bleſs him*, Gen. 22. 16, 17. 'Tis a temper of Mind in which God delights, when his Attendants reſolve to *Obey* without *any exception*, 1 Sam. 15. 22. *Hath the Lord as great delight in Burnt-offering and Sacrifices; as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? Behold to Obey is better than Sacrifice; and to hearken, than the Fat of Rams.*

9. Attending upon God implies *giving Glory to his Name, and acknowledging that his is the Kingdom and the Power.* Though the *Offerings and Sacrifices* enjoyned by the Law are to be offered *no more; Chriſt* who was typified by thoſe Sacrifices, having *offered up himſelf once for all*, and *put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*; yet under the New Teſtament Diſpenſation, Attendants upon God have their Sacrifices to offer: they muſt preſent *themſelves a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is their reaſonable Service*, Rom. 12. 1. and ſays the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 15. *By Him therefore*, by Chriſt Jeſus, *let us offer the Sacrifice of Praiſe*

*to God continually; that is the fruit of our Lips, giving thanks to his Name.* Thoſe glorious Spirits which attend above, and ſurround the Throne in the Heavenly Kingdom, Praiſe is their perpetual employment: and to their Eternal Joy and Delight, they find perpetual reaſon for it. *Worthy is the Lord to receive Glory and Honour, and Power; for he has created all things, and for his Pleaſure they are and were created.* Worthy *alſo is the Lamb that was ſlain,* to receive the ſame; *and therefore Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto him that ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever,* Rev. 4. 11. & 5. 13.

This Service of *Thanksgiving*, the Lord much *inſiſts* on, is *well-pleaſed* with, and *accounts* himſelf *glorified* by. Pſal. 113. 1, 2, 3. *Praiſe ye the Lord; Praiſe, O ye Servants of the Lord: Praiſe the Name of the Lord: Bleſſed be the Name of the Lord from this time forth, and for evermore; from the riſing of the Sun to the going down of the ſame, the Lord's Name is to be praiſed.* Behold alſo, how *acceptable thankful* Attendants are. Pſal. 69. 30, 31. *I will praiſe the Name of God with a Song, and will magnifie him with Thanksgiving; this alſo ſhall pleaſe the Lord better than an Ox or Bullock that hath Horns and Hoofs.* And this is our way of

of Glorifying God, who is ſo infinitely Glorious, that *to his Glory no addition* can be made, but only a *Declaration and Acknowledgment* made of it: and when theſe Acknowledgments are *largeſt*, it muſt be confeſſed, that he is *exalted above all Bleſſings and Praiſe.*

10. Attendance upon God implies *a continuing to follow him.* Holy *David* ſays, his Ears were *opened*, or *boared*, to hearken to God's Voice, *Pſal.* 40.6. Here is an Alluſion unto the *Iſraelitiſh Servant*, who was ſo *well* in his *Maſter's Houſe*, that he *refuſed* to go out *free* at the *year of releaſe*; and had his *Ear boared with an Awl to the Poſt of the Door*, to ſignifie his reſolution to *ſerve* his Maſter continually. To *profeſs* Service to the Lord, and then to *depart* from him, is *highly* to *reproach* and diſhonour him, and in effect to ſay, that *fleſhly* and *worldly Luſts* are better *Lords* than *He*; 'tis more *notoriouſly* to *deſpiſe* him, and to *harden* others in their *contempt* of him, and of his Word and Commandments. Attenders upon God give not over following him in all thoſe ways he has commanded them to walk in. They *follow on to know him*, they follow him *fully*, and being *upheld with the right hand of his Righteouſneſs*, their *Souls follow hard after him*, Pſal. 63.8.

And whom ſhould they follow? to whom elſe ſhould they go? The Lord has the *words of Eternal Life*, He alone has *Grace*, and *Honour*, and *Glory*, and *all good things* elſe to give; and to go away from him is to *loſe all this*, and to tread the *path* which leads to *Eternal Death*. Attenders upon God cannot change their Lord, but they muſt *change* for the *worſe*; nay, the *very beſt* for the *very worſt of all*: therefore they are *unchangeably his*, ſtedfaſt and *unmovable*, always *abiding*, and *abounding* in his Work and Service.

In the third place, I am to ſpeak of *ſeveral ſorts of Attending upon God*. It will be needful to inſiſt particularly on theſe, that you may have a more diſtinct underſtanding of your Duty in the Extent and Latitude of it. The Scripture makes a great difference between Attendance, and Attendance upon God; ſo that there are diverſe kinds of it, as ſhall be manifeſted in theſe following *Diſtinctions*.

I. There is an Attendance upon God which is *with the lips and body only*; and that which is with the *Heart alſo*. I begin with this diſtinction to prevent *Hypocriſie* and *Formality* in Religious Duties, whereby the

the Jealous God is ſo much provoked, and Profeſſors deceive others, but principally cheat and ruine their own Souls.

1. An Attendance which is *with the lips and body only.* God by the Prophet ſpake againſt this, and by his *own Son* ſhews the *vanity* of it, and how *diſpleaſing* 'tis to him, Mat. 15. 7,8. *Ye Hypocrites, well did* Eſaias *propheſie of you, ſaying, This People draweth near unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* The *body* indeed is to give Attendance, as being the *Temple of the Spirit.* The *Tongue* is then moſt *Angelical*, and Man's *Glory*, when moſt enlargedly it does *confeſs* to God, *call upon*, and *praiſe* and *magnifie* his Name. But if when the *eyes* are *lift up* towards Heaven, the *hands* are *ſtretched forth* with great eagerneſs, the *knees bowe* with ſeeming Humility and Devotion, and the *words of the mouth* are ſerious and holy, and with appearing fervency; all this while the *heart keeps aloof*, and at a *diſtance from God*; values not his *love*, his *grace*, or *Communion with him*; but goes after its *pleaſures, luſts and covetouſneſs:* Alas! Here is only a *dead* and *rotten carcaſs* of a *Duty* without a *Soul*; and 'tis very loathſom and abominable. In all Religious Performances, if the *heart*

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does not at all care to *draw near*; 'tis certain the Lord *will not draw near neither* as to his gracious preſence: And if *God be not found* in the Duty, nor the *Heart* of the performer found there, how unprofitable muſt the performance needs be!

2. There is an Attendance upon God not with the Body only, but *with the Heart alſo*. He ſpeaketh unto us as unto *Children*, and ſaith, *My Son give me thy heart*, Prov. 23. 26. Give him *never ſo much* without this, you give him *nothing* that he *cares* for. The Heart does the *chief part* in the pure and acceptable Worſhip of God. The *Heart muſt keep his Commandments*, elſe they are not kept. Prov. 3. 1. *My Son forget not my Law, but let thy Heart keep my Commandments.* The Pſalmiſt *lifted up his very Soul to God*, Pſal. 25. 1. this the Lord look'd at, and liked. Thoſe *Graces* which are to be *acted* in Attendance upon God, as Faith and holy Reverence, Love, Deſire, and Hope, and ſuch like, the Heart is the *Seat* of them; and 'tis by the Heart that they are *exerciſed*. And when the Heart being cleanſed from its Defilements, and weaned from the Allurements of this World, *draws very near* to God; and *God* alſo *draws very near*; theſe his *nearer approaches*, how *reviving*, how *healing*

*ing* and *confirming* are they! When the Spirit of a Saint does *before the time*, in a ſenſe *return to God who gave it*, and converſe with him in the *heavenly places*, that *converſe* how *high*, and *joyful*, and *beneficial* is it found! When *Moſes* came down from the Mount where he had been with God, *his Face did ſhine*; and when the Heart has been above in Heaven, a *clearer light* does *ſhine* into it, and 'tis more glorioufly *tranſformed* into the Divine *Image* and *Nature*.

II. There is an Attendance upon God which is *voluntary*, and which is through *conſtraint* and *forced*.

1. An Attendance which is *voluntary*; When God by his *powerful Grace* inclines and determines the Will to *himſelf*; ſo that *He* is choſen, and his ſpecial Favour and Bleſſings are valued above all things. A mighty ſtrength is put forth, and yet without *coaction*, in bending the Will of Man towards God, and to his Will, which naturally is ſo perverſe and obſtinate in Evil, that 'tis fitly compared to an *Iron Sinew*. What a Power is it which makes it pliable! *Pſal.* 110. 3. *Thy People ſhall be willing in the day of thy Power*. And when *to will* is thus wrought, the Heart is then enlarged, and at liberty to come to

God, and to do its Duty. There is a renewed Nature, which is *principium motus*, a principle of ſpiritual Motion. This is notably expreſſed, Zach. 8. 21. *And the Inhabitants of one City ſhall go to another, ſaying, let us go ſpeedily to pray before the Lord, and to ſeek the Lord of Hoſts. I will go alſo.* The like temper we find, Jer. 50. 5. *They ſhall ask the way to* Zion *with their Faces thitherward, ſaying, come and let us joyn our ſelves to the* Lord *in a perpetual Covenant that ſhall not be forgotten.*

2. There is an Attendance which is *through conſtraint, and forced.* The Heart is not right with God, nor taken with *himſelf* at all. But *preſſing neceſſity* drives the Soul to him, for ſome *benefit* which *none but he* can beſtow. Or there are ſome *indications of God's Anger* and Diſpleaſure. The *effects of which*, they which attend upon him, *feel* or *fear*; whereupon they are *forced to cry for mercy.* Such kind of Attenders were thoſe, Pſal. 78. 34, 35, 36, 37. *When he ſlew them then they ſought him, they returned and enquired early after God; they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheleſs they did flatter him with their Mouth, and lyed unto him with their Tongues; for their Heart was not right with him, neither*

were

*were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant.* Had they not *felt* God's *Hand*, he had not *heard* their *Voice*; had not *peril* been *extream*, they would not have run to this *Rock* for *refuge*: had not *enemies preſt hard* upon them, they would not have cryed to *this high Redeemer* for *deliverance*. But their *cries* were *lies* and *flatteries*. As ſoon as the danger was in their apprehenſion over, their naughty Hearts ſtarted aſide like deceitful bowes, and they ſoon returned to their corrupt way. In Attending upon God let not *Affliction*, *Conviction*, and *fear of puniſhment*, be the *only cords* that *hale* you to your Duty. The more there is of God's Servants *wills* in *his work*, the more acceptable and well-pleaſing is the Service.

III. There is an Attendance upon God which is *ordinary*, and *extraordinary*.

1. An Attendance upon God which is *ordinary*. As we are ordinarily to be employed in the works of our particular Callings, ſo the works of our general Calling as we are Chriſtians, muſt in no wiſe be neglected. As we have *Bodies* to feed and to cloath, and ſome buſineſs about the World to mind and manage. So we have *Souls* to look after, and a *God to ſerve*; and this is the *main buſineſs* of all.

To

To *work out our Salvation with fear and trembling*, is that which ſhould always be upon our Hearts. That Man may truly ſay, *Diem perdidi*, I have *loſt a day*, if a day is gone, and nothing at all of *this work* done. *Mary* is *commended* who heard and heeded Chriſt's word, and according to the direction of it, minded the *one thing needful*, and *choſe the good part which could not be taken away from her.* Whereas *Martha* is taxed and reproved, for being *careful, and troubled about many things*, Luke 10. 41, 42. All the Lord's Servants are to be Attendants *in ordinary.* Religion is to be the conſtant buſineſs of their lives, as being of greateſt concern, and moſt worthy of their time and labour.

2. There is an Attendance upon God which is *extraordinary.* When he goes out of the *common way* and courſe of his Providence; his Servants ought to *follow* him; and as *He* acts extraordinarily in a way of *Judgment*, or of *Mercy.* They are to do ſomething extraordinary in the Duties they have ſuch a ſignal and loud Call to.

Acts of ſeverity are ſtyled, God's *ſtrange Acts*, Iſa. 28. 21. *The Lord will riſe up as in Mount* Perazim, *that he may do his work, his ſtrange work; and bring to paſs his act, his*

*his ſtrange act.* Affliction is ſaid to be *ſtrange*, either becauſe his *ordinary* courſe is *otherwiſe*: Kindneſs and Mercy is that which he delights in ſhewing; or it may denote *Judgments* that are unuſual, and that have ſomething more than ordinary of terror and inſtruction. When the Lord is thus *raiſed up out of his holy Habitation*, and comes forth to viſit and puniſh Iniquity, there ſhould be *great preparation to meet him*, Amos 4.12. *Becauſe I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God O Iſrael.* There ſhould be *deep Humiliation* before him. 1 Pet. 5.6. *Humble your ſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.* There muſt be *ſtrong cries* unto him for pitty, favour, and a ſpirit ſuited to his dealings. Pſal. 18.6. *In my diſtreſs I called upon the Lord, and cryed unto my God, he heard my Voice out of his holy Temple; and my cry came before him, even into his Ears.* Sin muſt be *forſaken* with more than *ordinary ſorrow and hatred*; as that which has provoked the Lord to be ſo very angry; and *Righteouſneſs* muſt be *followed* after with greater *zeal* and *diligence*. Iſa. 26. 9. *When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs.*

On

On the other ſide, when God does act *extraordinarily* in *deliverance and ſalvation*, Songs ſuitable to Deliverance ſhould be loud; the Heart ſhould be exceedingly well tuned to praiſe his Name. His Attendants ſhould call upon *their Souls, and all that is within them, to bleſs him*, Pſal. 103.1. *Love* ſhould be extraordinarily ardent unto *God the deliverer*, when extraordinary deliverance has been wrought. And he that is ſo mighty to ſave, ſhould be both *feared* and *believed* in together. Exod. 14.31. *And* Iſrael *ſaw that great work which the Lord did upon the* Egyptians, *and the People feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his Servant* Moſes.

I might alſo add, that when *Falls* have been *foul*, and *ſcandalous ſins* have been committed, then there ſhould be *extraordinary contrition* and *ſupplication* unto God for *Pardon*, *Healing*, for *Eſtabliſhment by his Spirit*, and for the *Joy of his Salvation*. When *David* an eminent Saint and Prophet, was of a ſudden turned black as Hell, and become a Monſter of Ingratitude, Impurity and Cruelty, he comes unto God being awakened by *Nathan's* Miniſtry, with great ſhame and brokenneſs of Heart, *Pſal.* 51.16,17. he implores *mercy*, begs Eaſe, and the healing of his wounded

wounded Conſcience: He cries for a *clean Heart*, and a *right Spirit*: and being ſenſible of his own weakneſs, nay, treacherouſneſs and unfaithfulneſs to himſelf, he intreats that the Lord would undertake for him, and by his *own free Spirit continually uphold him.*

IV. There is an Attendance upon God which is *Secret in the Cloſet*, *Private in the Family*, and *Publick in the Congregation.*

1. An Attendance upon God that is *Secret in the Cloſet.* Our Lord was much in Prayer alone by himſelf; ſometime a *great while before Day*; and ſometime he continued in it *all Night.* He commands and urges ſecret Prayer, upon every one of his Diſciples, Mat. 6. 6. *But thou when thou prayeſt enter into thy Cloſet; and when thou haſt ſhut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.* God ſees in ſecret, and hears even whiſper'd Confeſſions and Petitions. And when 'tis ſaid that He *is* in ſecret, it ſeems to intimate a *ſpecial gracious preſence*, that is vouchſafed to them that are *often alone* with him. In this ſecret Attendance upon God, we may uſe a greater παῤῥησία, *freedom* of Speech, and tell him all that we *fear* and *feel*, and *ayle* and

and *desire*. Secret Duties which Man can take no notice of, have not *those motives* which are very *prevalent with Hypocrites*; who lov'd to Pray *standing in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets*; where two Streets met, that those in the one Street and in the other, might behold their Devotions, and applaud them. God is pleased to *listen* and *hearken* after Prayer, and there is not the *closest homeliest Corner*, where there is a *sincere Supplicant*, but God is really there to *fulfil and grant the desire*; and to *support* the *burthen'd*, if not to *remove the burthens* that are groaned under, *Psal.*38.9. *All my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* As according to *Solomon*, *A gift in secret pacifieth Anger*; *and a reward in the bosom strong wrath*, Prov. 21.14. so *secret confession of sin, bitter mourning for it*, and *begging forgiveness in the Name of Jesus* will prevail for the *pacifying* of God's *fiercest displeasure*; and the obtaining of his Love and Grace.

2. There is an Attendance upon God that is *Private in the Family*. This has been wofully, sinfully, shamefully neglected not only by the *prophane*, but by them that *call themselves Professors*, though *hardly worthy* of that Name. Family Worship has been much press'd from the Pulpit;

pit; Oh when ſhall it once be, that *every ones practiſe* will be *anſwerable!* I read not only of a *Dedication* of the *Tabernacle* and *Temple*; but alſo of the *Houſes* of the *Iſraelites*, Deut. 20.5. Pſal.30. was compoſed at the *Dedication of the Houſe of* David. The *Iſraelites* juſtly called their Houſes *God's* Houſes. And thoſe tumultuous combined, and inſulting Enemies of theirs in Pride, Scorn and Deriſion ſaid, *Let us take to our ſelves the Houſes of God in poſſeſſion*, Pſal. 83.12. Houſes were dedicated to the Lord's Service. *Joſhua* ſays, *I and my Houſe we will ſerve the* Lord; and all *Iſrael* promiſe the ſame, Joſh.24.15,21. *David* ſays, he will walk *within his Houſe with a perfect Heart*, Pſal. 101. 2. there be Songs of *Mercy and of Judgment*. Indeed the *voice of rejoycing and Salvation is in the Tabernacle of the Righteous*, Pſal.118.15. The Lord is adored and praiſed in the Tabernacles of them to whom he has ſhewed himſelf a God of Salvation.

*Cornelius* one of the *firſt-fruits* of the *Gentiles*, was a *devout Man, and he feared God with all his Houſe, and prayed to God alway*, Act. 10.2. And fearing of God *implies* calling *upon his Name*, as *caſting off fear*, and *reſtraining of Prayer* are joyned together, *Job* 15.4. ſo that he *prayed unto God with*

*with all his Houſe*; and there is not the leaſt reaſon to think that they did not pray *altogether*, unleſs ſuch kind of praying had been any where forbidden. We read of a *Curſe* and a *Bleſſing* not only upon *Perſons*, but upon *Families*. Prov. 3. 33. *The Curſe of the Lord is in the Houſe of the wicked, but he bleſſeth the Habitation of the Juſt.* Surely Families have reaſon to Pray *againſt* the *one*; and that the *other* may reſt on them. And truly our Lord Jeſus in that *Prayer of his own making*, which is the *great Directory* for Prayer; when he does inſtruct us to ſay, *Give us this day our daily Bread*, very plainly ſignifies, that thoſe in Families that *daily Eat together*, ought alſo *daily to pray together*. And are they *only* to pray together for *daily Bread*? no; they are alſo to Pray for the *hallowing of God's Name*, the *coming of his Kingdom*; and that his *Will might be done on Earth as 'tis done in Heaven*. They are to pray for the *forgiveneſs* of paſt *treſpaſſes*; and that Grace may prevent their being *led into Temptation*, and may *deliver them from Evil*.

You ſee here is ground enough for Families to give their Attendance upon God. Families are the *Seminaries* from which both *Church* and *State* are furniſhed; and

if

if there were more of Devotion and Inſtruction, and Diſcipline there, the *Church* in all probability would be *more pure*; and the *State more righteouſly and better ordered.* Whereas, if Families *live without God in the World*; the Governours, the Children and Servants are all uſually wicked, and likely to become worſe and worſe: and the *Churches Face* is foul'd with *odious ſpots and ſtains*; and the *State* grows more *corrupt*, till at length 'tis *ripe for ruine.*

3. There is an Attendance upon God that is *publick in the Congregation.* In publick Aſſemblies the true God is owned and honoured in the *Face of the Sun*; and the Lord Chriſt is glorified; Chriſtians Aſſembling in his Name, depending upon his Promiſe to *be in the midſt of them, and to bleſs them.* He *walks in the midſt of the Golden Candleſticks*, Rev. 1. 13. He bleſſes the Ordinances himſelf has inſtituted, to the enlightning, purifying, and Conſolation of ſincere Attendants on him. In theſe Publick Aſſemblies, Saints *unite their ſpiritual ſtrength* in *wreſtling* with God; the *Faith* and *holy Deſires* of a *great many* Believers together being *conjunct*, are likely to be the more *prevailing.* Theſe Aſſemblies ought to be valued and frequented; to forſake them, is ill to the forſaker:

Hence that caution, Heb. 10.25. *Not forſaking the Aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is; but exhorting one another, and ſo much the more as ye ſee the day approaching.* The breaking of ſolemn publick Aſſemblies, ſhould be an Heart-breaking thing to us; and the Lord has promiſed to gather thoſe that are ſorrowful upon this ſcore. Zeph. 3.18 *I will gather them that are ſorrowful for the ſolemn Aſſembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burthen.*

V. There is an Attendance upon God on *his own day*, and *upon other days.*

1. An Attendance upon God on *his own day.* A *ſeventh part* of our time is *hallowed* by the *fourth Commandment.* Six days are for Labour, a ſeventh for Reſt from that Labour; and that we may have leiſure, with greater ſeriouſneſs to attend upon God. The great Creator having made the World in ſix days, reſted on the ſeventh, and appointed it for a Sabbath, and bleſſed it. And the Apoſtle tells us that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the great Redeemer, *is entred into his Reſt, having ceaſed his own works, as God did from his*; and therefore *there remains a reſt* σαββατισμὸς, *a keeping of a Sabbath to the People of God,* Heb.

Heb. 4. 9,10. As the Jewiſh Sabbath was kept in Commemoration of the Lord's reſting from Creation, ſo the Chriſtian Sabbath is to be obſerved in *Commemoration* of *Chriſt*, who is over all *God bleſſed for ever*, his *reſting from the work of Redemption*; it is in him that we have reſt by Faith at preſent, and hope for a bleſſed, glorious, and everlaſting Reſt in Heaven. The day that Chriſt *roſe*, was the *day* on which he *reſted*; for his *lying in the Grave* was *not his reſt*, but *part of his Humiliation*; and that was the firſt day of the Week. On *this* Chriſtian Churches aſſembled for Worſhip, *Acts* 20. 6, 7. The Apoſtle was at *Troas ſeven days*. We read not a word, *being among Chriſtians*, that he ſolemnly Worſhipt on the *ſeventh day*, but *upon the firſt day of the Week the Diſciples came together to break Bread*. Upon this day Chriſtians *being aſſembled together*, *Collections were made* for good Uſes at *Corinth*, and in the Churches of *Galatia*, 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. Nay, this is called the *Lord's Day*, Rev. 1. 10. Now as the Lord's Supper is a Supper of the Lord's Inſtitution; ſo the *Lord's Day*, ἡμέρα κυριακὴ, is a day of the *Lord's appointing and ordaining*. The prophanation of this Chriſtian Sabbath has been puniſhed with *remarkable Judgments*; The

*Ordinances* administred thereon have been *owned and blessed* to the *Conversion* and *Confirmation* of *Thousands and Millions of Souls.*

On this Christian Sabbath, what kind of Attendance on God should ours be! Before the day comes it should be longed for; and when 'tis come, it should be most welcom. Assoon as our *Senses are unlock't* in the Morning, our Souls should be as it were, *caught up to the third Heaven*, and there continue until Night. Our Lord is *risen indeed*, and we should *rise with him*, and *seek those things which are above, where he sits at the right hand of God*, Col. 3. 1. Things on Earth will be intruding into our Hearts and Thoughts; but no Entertainment must be given them. A Desire or Wish must not be allowed them, unless it be, that we may not be distracted with them. When *Abraham* was just come to Mount *Moriah*, he says to his Servants, *Abide you here, and I and the Lad will go yonder and Worship*, Gen. 22. 5. So when the Lord's Day comes, we should say to all our Worldly Businesses and Concerns, *Abide as you are; cease from our Care and Thoughts, whilst we and our Hearts ascend unto the Hill of the Lord and Worship.* This day is appointed for our more solemn approaches unto God, and that we may have

have more intimate Fellowſhip with him; and if Communion with him be enjoyed, we ſhall find ſo much Grace and Strength, and Peace therein, that we ſhall be perfectly of the Pſalmiſt's mind, *That a day in God's Courts is better than a Thouſand*, Pſal.84.10. The very Palaces of the wicked are contemptible. No place under Heaven is ſo deſirable as the Sanctuary.

2. There is an Attendance upon God *on other days*. He is the Lord of our time, and therefore every day, he ſhould have ſome part of it. We ſhould be careful to know how he would have us to employ that time which himſelf gives, and will call us to account for. We *ſhould live the reſt of our time in the Fleſh, to the Will of God*, not to the *Luſts* of *other Men*, or our *own*, 1 Pet.4.2. and we ſhould grieve, that ſo much has been waſted to his Diſpleaſure and Diſhonour. *David* was glad to go up to the Houſe of God on the Sabbath; but he was alſo a daily Attender on him. Pſal. 86. 3. *Be merciful unto me, O Lord, for I cry unto thee daily.* So *Heman*, Pſal. 88. 9. *Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have ſtretched out my Hands unto thee.* And *Daniel* rather than omit *praying daily* unto God, ventured to be caſt into the *Lion's Den*; and God miraculouſly appears for

him, his *Mouth* having *been open ſo often* in fervent Supplication; God *ſhuts the Lions Mouths*, that though in the Den among them, they did not make a Prey of him. Every day we ſhould be in the Fear of God, and have Faith in him; and if in the midſt of our Worldly Buſineſs, our Hearts frequently ſtep aſide to attend on God in *mental Applications* to him; that attendance will be both acceptable and profitable. But ſome times every day we ſhould ſequeſter our ſelves from other buſineſs; that this greateſt and beſt buſineſs may be minded; which is to draw near to God.

6. There is an attendance upon God in *a time of Liberty and a Calm*, and an attending upon him in a *time of Perſecution and a Storm*. In a time of Liberty the Lord has many Followers, who leave him when a Storm of Perſecution beats in their Faces. When the *King of Navarre* was about to Apoſtatize to Popery, and *Beza* came to *confirm* him in the Truth, he made this *Anſwer*, That *he would never go ſo far to Sea as not to be able to put to Shore when he pleaſed*; He ſhewed plainly, that he could turn *Papiſt* to get the *Kingdom of France*; but he was reſolved *not to go through much Tribulation*

*bulation to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* The Hearers compared to *ſtony ground* heard the Goſpel with *forwardneſs* and *joy*, while the *Goſpel and Proſperity* were conjoyned; but when *Perſecution and Tribulation aroſe becauſe of the Word, they were offended*, they kept not their ſtanding, but in that time of Temptation fell away, *Mat.* 13. 20,21. We ſhould be other kind of attendants than ſo. Let us *count the coſt* of being Diſciples, and conclude that *Grace* and *Glory* will *quit the coſt*. Our *Lord* was *offended* at *nothing* that was to be *done or ſuffered* for our Redemption; ſurely neither his Commands nor his Croſs ſhould be matter of offence to us, but ſtill we ſhould remain his followers.

I might alſo add another *diſtinction*: There is an attendance upon God in *Earth* and in *Heaven*; the one is *Duty*, the other is *Reward*; the one is *ſhort*, the other is *endleſs*; and yet in that Service there ſhall not be the *leaſt wearineſs*; nay, ſo far from that, that there will be *fulneſs of Joy and everlaſting Pleaſure*. Thus I have ſpoken of the *ſeveral ſorts of attending upon God.*

In the fourth place I am to *aſſign the reaſons* why the *Children of Men ought to give their attendance upon God.*

1. The Command to attend upon God is written *on the Heart of Man by Nature.* There is both the *Creed*, and the *Law of Nature*. There are several Truths that are apparent without a supernatural Revelation; as that there *is a God*; that he *rules the World*; that he *sees all the works* of the Children of Men; and that he will *call them to an account for all that they have done.* There are also *Commands* which are written in the Hearts of Men. Rom. 2. 14. *For when the Gentiles which have not the Law do by Nature the things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves; which shew the work of the Law written in their Hearts*; and among these Commands, this is as plain as any, That *God is to be worshipped.* The Gentiles therefore are blamed because this Command was not observed, Rom. 1. 21. *Because that when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful: but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkned.* Now as sins have their *peculiar aggravations* that are committed *against the Light of Nature*, so neglect of Duty is highly aggravated, when 'tis *evident by the Light of Nature*, that such Duty ought to be performed.

2. At-

2. Attendance upon God is *frequently called for and urged in the Scripture.* The Lord ſpake this with his *own Voice* from Heaven, and afterwards wrote it with his *own Hand* upon the Tables of Stone, that we ſhould *have no other Gods before him*, that we ſhould not *Worſhip Idols*, that we ſhould not *take his Name in vain*, Exod. 20. Our Lord repeats what was enjoyned long before, *Mat.* 4. 10. *It is written, thou ſhalt Worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*; and he ſays Joh. 4. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they that Worſhip him, muſt Worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.* So Pſal. 22. 23. *Ye that fear the Lord praiſe him; all ye the Seed of* Jacob *glorifie him; and fear him all ye the Seed of* Iſrael. See alſo Pſal. 105. 3, 4. *Glory ye in his holy Name, let the Heart of them rejoyce that ſeek the Lord: Seek the Lord and his Strength, ſeek his Face evermore.* And as the *word* of God calls for this, ſo the *Providence* of God *ſeconds* his *Precepts.* The *diſpenſing of mercies* calls upon us to *attend the Father of them* with our *Praiſes.* And *afflictions* ſhould *quicken* us in our ſeeking God; he requires this, Pſal. 50. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me.* And he reckons upon it that he ſhould hear from his People, when his chaſt-

chaſtning was upon them, Hoſ. 5. 15. *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my Face; in their affliction they will ſeek me early.*

3. God ſees *whether there be an attendance upon himſelf*, and *after what manner*, and *that with a jealous eye.* And this is another ſtrong reaſon for our attending on him. *The Lord looks down from Heaven upon the Children of Men*, to this very end, *that he may ſee if there be any that underſtand and ſeek God*, Pſal. 53. 2. ſo that he very ſtrictly obſerves, how Mens Hearts are affected towards him and his Service; and he cannot but be very much diſpleaſed with the whole Race of fallen Man, becauſe Rom. 3. 10, 11. *There is none Righteous, no not one; there is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after God* The Lord takes notice how Days and Weeks, and Months and Years go over Mens Heads, and yet that God from whom they have their all, they ſeek not to for any thing; neither return they any thanks to him, how much ſoever they receive from him. And thoſe who attend upon God, he obſerves the manner how they do it; and *heartleſs Duties*, doing the *work of the* Lord *deceitfully*, provokes and kindles the Fire of his Jealouſie. Mal. 1. 14. *Curſed be the deceiver,*

*deceiver, who having a Male in his Flock, voweth and ſacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing.* The *ſecond Commandment* which directs us as to *Divine Worſhip*, makes mention that the *Lord is a jealous God.* He cannot endure to have his *Service neglected*, as if there were *no profit or reward* in ſeeking him: He cannot endure a *negligent Service.* As if he were an Idol, as if he had *Eyes, but did not ſee* or take notice who they are that *mock him.* God's Omniſcience and all-ſeeing Eye, ſtruck a great *awe* upon the Apoſtle, it made him draw near to God; and it made him very ſerious when he had to do with him. Heb. 4.13. *Neither is there any Creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight; but all things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

4. Man's *neceſſities ſhould conſtrain him to attend upon God.* Sin has made the Children of Men in the worſt ſenſe poor and needy; they fancy themſelves *rich*, and *dream of fulneſs*; but behold 'tis *only a dream*; for they are *wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* Now for the ſupply of their needs, 'tis in vain to have recourſe to any but God. The *broken Ciſterns* can *hold no Water:* and *cannot furniſh* them with *any* that run

to

to them; but there is *enough* in the *Fountain of living Waters* for all that repair to it. An experienced attender upon God, knew how to be furniſhed with every thing, Pſal. 57. 2. *I will cry unto God moſt high; unto God, who performeth all things for me.* And the Apoſtle ſpeaks with a moſt reaſonable confidence, *Pſal.* 4. 19. *My God ſhall ſupply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Chriſt Jeſus.* The *one thing needful* is alone from God; and from him are all things elſe: His *Kingdom and Righteouſneſs* he beſtows on them that ſeek him; and *all things elſe ſhall be added*, Matt. 6. 33. Man has beggar'd himſelf; as to the true Riches he is a meer Bankrupt: In *him*, that is, *in his Fleſh dwelleth no good thing*, Rom. 7. 18. and that which is *born of the fleſh is fleſh*, wholly carnal, till there be a *regeneration by the Spirit*. How ſhall Man, who is ſo very evil, be made truly good? All true Grace and Goodneſs is from God, who is therefore called the *God of all Grace*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. and 'tis through Chriſt that 'tis all communicated: Therefore *every good thing* in Believers, is ſaid to *be in them in Chriſt Jeſus*, Philem. ver. 6. Man has need to come to God, for he has ruined himſelf, and 'tis the Lord alone to *whom Salvation belongs*. Man has *deſtroyed himſelf*, *in God is his*

*his help* found, *Hoſ.* 13. 9. Thoſe whom the Lord ſaves not, muſt needs periſh.

5. Man's *Obligations to attend upon God, are ſtill increaſing.* The Lord cauſes *his Sun to ariſe upon the evil* as well as *the good*, upon the *unrighteous* as well as the *righteous*, Matt. 5. 45. He is *kind to the unthankful and the evil*, Luke 6. 35. God's Bounty calls for a return of Duty, and ſhould quicken Man to ſeek the Lord who is ſo abundant in Goodneſs. In *God's hand Man's breath is*, and *every time he breaths* God *ſaves his Life*; from God's hand he receives whatever he has. How ſtrictly is Man engaged to acknowledge God in all! to ſerve him, and to glorifie his Name! Even thoſe that are *bad*, have experience of *the riches of Divine Goodneſs, and Forbearance, and Long-ſuffering*; and though this goodneſs is but *common*, yet *offers* are made to them of *ſpecial Grace*. All *the day long* the Lord *ſtretches forth his hand to the diſobedient and gain-ſaying*; and in *that hand* are no leſs than the *good things* of *Time* and of *Eternity*. The wickedeſt and worſt of Men, if they conſent to *leave* their *wicked ways*, and to have *their wicked hearts changed*, and come to God, they ſhall graciouſly be accepted, be *abundantly pardoned*, and have the beſt things beſtowed on them. God is ready

to

to give *Grace* to them that have *none*; and to give *more Grace* where he has already wrought it.

6. Promiſes are *precious that are made to attenders upon God*, and *threatnings are terrible againſt Contemners of God, who refuſe to attend upon him*. Thus the Lord works upon thoſe *two great commanding things* in the Soul of Man, his *Hope* and his *Fear*, that he may have Service from him. If we *draw near to God*, he promiſes to *draw nigh to us*, James 4. 8. and his approaches to his People are the *manifeſtations of his Pitty and Power* for their help and ſupply; the *communications of that Grace* which may be ſuitable and ſufficient in the time of need: He *ſays not to the Seed of* Jacob, *ſeek ye me in vain*. *Moſes* ſuppoſes *Iſrael* apoſtatizing from their God by Idolatry, and his anger waxed hot againſt them, and themſelves ſcattered among the Nations: Yet ſays he, *If from thence thou ſhalt ſeek the Lord thy God, thou ſhalt find him, if thou ſeek him with all thy heart and with all thy ſoul*, Deut. 4. 29. Gracious words to the ſame purpoſe are ſent in a Letter to the Captives in *Babylon*, Jer. 29. 11, 12, 13. *For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, ſaith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end; then ſhall*

ye

*ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you; and ye ſhall ſeek me and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your heart.*

On the other hand, the God of *truth and juſtice breathes out threatnings and wrath* againſt them that deſpiſe him; that inſtead of ſeeking him, *turn their backs* upon him and *forſake him.* Iſa. 1. 24, 28. *Thus ſaith the Lord, the Lord of Hoſts, the mighty one of* Iſrael. *Ah! I will eaſe me of my adverſaries.* They were a burthen to him, which at laſt he grew weary to bear; *and revenge me of my Enemies; and the deſtruction of the tranſgreſſors, and of the ſinners, ſhall be together; and they that forſake the Lord ſhall be conſumed.* Sometimes God *promiſes and threatens* in the *ſame breath*, that he may prevail with Man to come to him, and make him afraid to refuſe. 1 Chron. 28. 9. *The Lord ſearcheth all hearts, and underſtandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts, if thou ſeek him he will be found of thee; but if thou forſake him he will caſt thee off for ever.* So Ezr. 8. 22. *The hand of our God is upon all them for good that ſeek him, but his power and his wrath is againſt all them that forſake him.* And the *promiſed good*, and the *threatned evil*, being thus *preſented together* to *our view*, our Hearts are the more

more likely to be affected with the *dreadfulneſs of the one*, and with the *deſirableneſs of the other.*

7. The *time will not laſt much longer, in which God will be attended upon.* Life is ſhort, and Death, which puts an end to Man's Life in this World, will bring the Seaſon of Mercy and Grace to a *full period:* There is *no paſſing* through that μέγα χάσμα *great gulph which is fixed* in the other World, *Luke* 16. 26. Prayers in *Hell* have *no Audience*, but a Denial, though but a *drop of Water* is asked: Nay, as the rich Man could not prevail for *any eaſe* for *himſelf*, ſo neither for a *Meſſenger* to be ſent to his *ſurviving, ſecure, and ſinful Brethren*, to prevent their coming into the *place of Torment.* Our Lord by *his Spirit* in the Patriarchs, *went and preached to the Spirits in Priſon*; but it was *before* they came to that Priſon; even *when the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of* Noah, 1 *Pet.* 3. 19, 20. When we read that admonition, *Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call ye upon him while he is near*, Iſa. 55. 6. there is a plain Intimation, that quickly it may be *impoſſible* to *find* him; and that to call upon him, may be *too late* and to *no purpoſe.* Deſpair hereafter will ſtop Sinners Mouths, and utterly diſcourage their crying unto God:

Then

Then they will *rather call to the Rocks and Mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the Face of him that ſits upon the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.*

8. If Man attend not upon God, *how much evil will he do, and whither will he go!* If *God* has no *Service* from him, *Sin and Satan* will have a *great deal.* Thoſe who are not well employed in holy Duties, are likely to be very ill employed in the unfruitful works of Darkneſs. The Nature of Man is ſo depraved, that it has a mighty propenſion to wickedneſs. And were it not for the Grace of God, which does either *change* corrupted Nature, or *chain* it, what a univerſal running out would there be into all Exceſs of Riot, and with what greedineſs would Iniquity be committed? But if God be not attended on and ſought unto, and proud ſcornful Sinners had rather he would *keep his Grace to himſelf,* than *beſtow any of it* upon them; he may juſtly leave them to the perverſe bent of their own Nature: and how will Sin abound then? how will a wicked Heart be perpetually ſending forth *polluted Streams?* Jer. 6. 7. *As a Fountain caſteth out her Waters, ſo ſhe caſteth out her wickedneſs.* The Lord puniſhes neglect of himſelf and of his Service, this way. He *leaves Men to*

*themſelves*; and 'tis a very righteous and proper puniſhment, Pſal. 81. 11, 12. *But my People would not hearken to my Voice, and Iſrael would none of me; ſo I gave them up to their own hearts luſts, and they walked in their own Counſels.* And Man being thus left to follow the counſels of a Carnal Mind, and to fulfil the Luſts of a wicked Heart; what a *Child of Hell* may he quickly become; and what *haſte* may he make *thither*? he may *ripen apace for ruine*, and be *ſuddenly deſtroy'd, and that without remedy.*

9. Attendance upon God is *not profitable to God in the leaſt, but Man has the benefit and advantage by it.* He was a Man of *eminent goodneſs*, whoſe *Soul ſaid unto the Lord*, Thou *art my Lord, my goodneſs extendeth not to thee*, Pſal. 16. 2. But though *David*'s goodneſs extended not to God, to draw near to God was good for *David.* Saints and Angels by their higheſt Services can add nothing to the Lord whom they ſerve. Their *ſublimeſt praiſes* are an *acknowledgment* that they have *their all from him*, and *in him.* The better we are, the better Obedience we yield; but the Lord is not bettered by our beſt Obedience. It is highly reaſonable we ſhould attend upon God; for though he *can receive nothing* from

from us; yet he is ready to *give himſelf* and *all things* to us, if we ſeek him diligently. He conſults our intereſt in his Commands to come, to fear, to love, and cleave to him, *Deut.* 10. 12, 13. *And now Iſrael, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to ſerve the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul; to keep the Commandments of the Lord, and his Statutes which I command thee this day for thy good?* Man's good you ſee, is aimed at; and that in fearing of God and keeping his Commandments, it may *be well with Man for ever.* Deut. 5. 29.

I come in the laſt place, to the *Application* of the Doctrine; the Uſes of it may be ſeveral.

USE I. Shall be of *Reproof.* Many ſorts of perſons deſerve reprehenſion, and need it.

1. They are to be reproved who are *haters of God, and hate to attend upon him.* 'Tis prodigiouſly unreaſonable, that the gracious God, who *fills the Earth with his goodneſs,* Pſal. 33. 5. and is *moſt worthy of the Love of all,* ſhould be hated *by any:*

Yet though ſtrange, 'tis too true, that God is hated by *many*, nay, by *moſt* of the Children of Men. Moſt are of *their Father the Devil, and the luſts of their Father they will do:* He is an hater of God, and ſo are they. All wicked Men are alienated from God, and Enemies in their Minds by wicked works: they diſlike him and his Service; they get out of his ways, and turn aſide out of his paths, and ſay, *Cauſe the holy One of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us*, Iſa. 30. 11. they care not to hear, to think of this holy One; they cannot abide to walk in his holy ways. Now if *love to God* be the *firſt and great Command*, how *great a ſin* muſt the *hatred of God* be called! and how unfit are they to be admitted hereafter into his glorious Preſence and Kingdom; who now *ſay unto God depart from us!* Moſt worthy they are to be ſent away from him with *his Curſe*, and to be ſentenced to that *everlaſting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, whom they reſemble in hating of God, and with whom they have joyned in rebelling againſt him.

2. They are to be reproved who *account Attendance upon God needleſs.* The Mind of Man appears to be ἀδόκιμον, void of Judgment, in determing what things are mainly to be minded. Things that are vanity

vanity and vexation of Spirit; what pains are taken to get them; what care is taken to keep them! The *one thing needful* is neglected, as if it were the *only thing unneceſſary*. The Heathen Poet cryed out,

*O curas hominum! O quantum eſt in rebus inane!*

The Care of Man about empty things, how injudicious is it? Time can be found *for every thing*, but the *making proviſion for Eternity*; and yet the providing for Eternity is the main thing to be done in time; and time was given chiefly for the doing of this. Are theſe to be our *great* enquiries, *What ſhall we eat and drink, and wherewith ſhall we be cloathed and adorned?* How *ſhall we heap up wealth, and gratifie our ſelves with ſenſual pleaſures?* How *ſhall we live plentifully our ſelves, and leave abundant ſubſtance to Poſterity?* Certainly there are matters of far greater importance and neceſſity to be regarded. The *truly grand* Enquiries are of *another Nature*. How *ſhall ſin be pardoned, and the Wrath of God appeaſed?* How *ſhall the Heart be changed, and made a new one, and the Soul that is ſo precious ſaved?* How *ſhall God be attended on, and ſerved, and glorified, ſo as to be en-*

*joyed, and eternal bleſſedneſs attained in the Enjoyment of him?* Attendance upon God is *no more* to be accounted *needleſs*, than *eternal happineſs is needleſs*, than the *loſs of a Soul* more valuable than the whole World, is to be eſteemed a *ſmall matter.*

3. They are to be reproved who look upon *attendance on God as a wearineſs, and grievous.* In following and trudging after Mammon, they are unwearied. How ſwift and many are the ſteps in the way to Earthly Delights and Treaſure! They riſe up early, ſit up late, rack their Wits, grow Lean with Care for the things of the World; and they are not grudging at all this Toil and Labour. But when they come to wait upon God, *time moves very ſlowly*; a quarter ſeems longer than an hour. Duties are *tedious* to them; they are *loth to begin*; and aſſoon as they have begun, they *do not wiſh for Communion with God*, or that they *themſelves* might be better'd; but that their *Duties were at an end.* The Prophet is very ſharp againſt them who deſpiſed the *Table of the Lord*, and look'd upon the *fruit and meat of it contemptible*; *and they ſaid, behold what a wearineſs it is!* Mal. 1. 12, 13. God is weary of ſuch unwilling Services as yours are. Iſa. 1. 13, 14. *Bring no more vain Oblations, they are a*

*trouble*

*trouble to me, I am weary to bear them.* And as he is weary of your ſervices, ſo he quickly may be *weary* to *bear you*; and he may count it a *comfort* to be *rid of you.* Ezek. 5. 13. *Thus my anger ſhall be accompliſhed, and I will cauſe my Fury to reſt upon them, and I will be comforted, and they ſhall know that I the Lord have ſpoken it in my Zeal, when I have accompliſhed my Fury in them.* We read of ſome that were *weary of Sabbaths*, the Ordinances then adminiſtred were to them no priviledges; and *when will the Sabbath be gone?* was their Language, *Amos* 8. 5. but ver. 7. the Lord ſwares he *would not forget their works*, and he threatens ver. 11. *to ſend a Famine in the Land; not a Famine of Bread, nor a thirſt for Water, but a Famine of hearing the words of the Lord:* And how *unlikely* were they *ever* to *be ſaved*; from whom *even the means of Salvation* were *taken away!*

4. They are to be reproved who are *ſinfully aſhamed, or afraid to attend upon God.* Some Ages are ſo degenerate, that *Religion* grows exceedingly *out of faſhion*, and *contempt of God* and *prophaneneſs*, is the thing that is *al-a-mode.* When *great* Men think it below them to be *good*, and *Policy* contemns *Piety*; when the *vileſt Men are exalted*, and wickedneſs grows into credit;

when *Judgment is turned away backward, and Juſtice ſtandeth afar off; when Truth is fallen in the Streets, and Equity cannot enter; and he that departeth from evil maketh himſelf a Prey*, Iſa. 59 14,15. then this *fear* and *ſhame* that I am ſpeaking againſt is apt to prevail. But why ſhould *any* be *aſhamed* to own themſelves Servants to the *greateſt and beſt of Lords?* Is not he *glorious in Holineſs?* Are not his *Precepts* concerning all things to be *eſteemed right?* Are not all thoſe *ways falſe* that lead from him? Has he not ſaid, *Thoſe that honour me I will honour, and thoſe that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed?* 1 Sam. 2. 30. Chriſt *will be aſhamed* of them at the great day, who are *aſhamed of him and of his Word*, before a perverſe and wicked Generation. And why ſhould any be afraid to attend upon that mighty Lord, who *does according to his Will in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth*; and *all the Inhabitants of the World are reputed as nothing before him?* Dan. 4. 35. Attenders upon God ſhould baniſh the fear of Man, for God has *evil Men and evil Angels in a Chain*, and his *ſincere Servants* under *his own keeping*. Thoſe who are afraid of Man that ſhall dye, forget the *living God*, and their Duty towards him, and how able he

is

is to protect them in the faithful diſcharge of it.

5. They are to be reproved who attend upon God, *that they may cover and cloak their wicked and worldly, and ſelfiſh deſigns.* They put on a *form of Godlineſs*, but 'tis the better to hide their *wickedneſs*. They are for external Worſhip; but when they *ſeem to ſeek after God moſt of all*, they are nothing at all but *ſelf-ſeekers*; and Religion is moſt unworthily made ſubſervient to ſecular Intereſt. Thus the Birds of Prey when they ſoar higheſt towards Heaven, have their Eyes ſtill downwards towards the Earth, to ſee what they may ſeize on there. But what abominable Hypocriſie is this, when *love to the Father* is pretended, but the thing *intended* is the gratifying the *luſts of the fleſh, the luſts of the Eyes, or the pride of life; which are not of the Father, but are of the World!* 1 Joh. 2. 16. A Cloak of Religion is a ſpecious, and goodly thing to look upon. Praying, Hearing, Profeſſing, Singing of Praiſes, Preſence at other Ordinances, looking upwards towards Heaven, and ſpeaking like Saints, *make the outſide* of this Cloak; and, *Come ſee my Zeal for the Lord of Hoſts*; and, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are theſe*; make the Cloak look ſtill the better

better outwardly. But the inſide is moſt *foul and filthy*; there is *Ambition, reprobate Concupiſcence, inſatiable Covetouſneſs*; the Purſe muſt be filled; the Palate muſt be pleaſed; the Senſes muſt be delighted; and Pride gratified with Applauſe and Preferment: But certainly the Lord will not hold ſuch *diſſemblers guiltleſs*, who with ſuch carnal deſigns do *take his Name in vain.*

6. They are to be reproved, who are *temporary Attenders upon God; but in time of trial and temptation, apoſtatize and depart from him.* Some kind of *faint wiſhes* they have, that they might be ſaved; and with ſome *kind of Joy* they entertain the glad-tydings of Salvation; but whatever becomes of their Souls, their reſolution is to ſleep in a *whole Skin*; and they will not hazard what they poſſeſs on Earth, for the ſake of a *Treaſure in Heaven.* The *heat of Perſecution ſcorches* ſuch Attenders as theſe, and cauſes all that is good in them *to wither away*, Mat. 13. 6. They can by no means be reconciled to the Croſs of Chriſt, though the *Spirit of Glory and of God* does reſt upon thoſe that take up this Croſs, and gives them a *Mouth and Wiſdom* to confound and ſilence the enemies of the Truth; and *ſtrength* to bear whatever wicked and unreaſonable

reasonable Men can inflict: Nay, *abundant Consolation*, when Sufferings most abound, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. *For as the Sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our Consolation also aboundeth by Christ.* When these temporary Followers of the Lord hear him say, *If any Man come to me and hate not*, i. e. less love, *his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my Disciple:* Their answer is, *This is an hard saying, who can hear it?* And not enduring the *Trial and Furnace*, 'tis a sign they are but *reprobate Silver which the Lord rejects*; and their utter Apostasie in the time of Temptation, shews they never *had root in themselves*, Matt. 13. 21. *If they had been of us*, says the Apostle, *they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us*, 1 John 2. 19.

7. They are to be reproved, who *rest in the bare formality of attending upon God*; *but 'tis not their desire or aim to reap any Spiritual Benefit thereby.* Education, Custom, and a regard to their Reputation, makes them to go in a *road and round of Duties*; and hereby an *ignorant natural Conscience* has some *kind of Peace:* But in all they do they have *no eye on God, nor any sincere desires after him.* So ignorant they are of them-

themſelves, that they are unſenſible of any *Spiritual Neceſſities* to be ſupplied; they are unſenſible of *any Luſts and Paſſions* to be mortified; of *any Plagues in their Hearts* to be healed. In attending upon God, *His* Approbation is principally to be minded; *He is a Jew that is one inwardly, whoſe praiſe is not of Man but of God*, Rom. 2. 29. And *God himſelf* is chiefly to be longed after, *Pſal.* 42. 1. *As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee O God.* But theſe formal Attendants mind not God's approving of them, neither do they deſire Communion with him. So the Work be but *done*, they care not *how*, nor how *little themſelves* are *Spiritually advantaged*. The Door turns upon the Hinges too and fro; but ſtill is where it was many years ago. So theſe Profeſſors come to Ordinances, and from them, no better than they were: They *were* many years ago, *proud, worldly, ſelfiſh, paſſionate, ſenſual, ſlothful*; and oh their *Sin* and *Shame!* that *ſo* they are *ſtill*, or *more ſo* than *ever*; notwithſtanding *all their Religious Services!*

8. The very *beſt* are to be reproved, *That there are ſo many ſins in their holieſt things, and when they give their beſt attendance upon God.* Though they are *new Creatures*, yet there is much of the *old man* re-

remaining; though they are *born of the Spirit*, yet in *part* they are ſtill *carnal*. And *this fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, ſo that they cannot do the things that they would*, Gal. 5. 17. and what they do, they *cannot do ſo well* as they deſire to do it. They are to be *pitied* indeed under their *groaning*, becauſe of *indwelling Sin*. And the Apoſtle calls himſelf *wretched* becauſe of *this*, who was *joyful* under the *heavieſt Croſs* he ever bore. And yet Saints are to be *reproved* too; becauſe were it not their *own fault*, they might ſtill *do and be better*. They might have *more Grace* from Chriſt, *Life more abundantly* from him; they might have more *Aid* from the Spirit; they might be *more enlarged* in Ordinances, and with *greater Swiftneſs* run the ways of God's Commandments. Tho' when they have done all, *all* is ſo *defective*, they have need of the perfect Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, to cover their Failings and Imperfections.

USE II. Of *Exhortation* to you *all* to *attend upon God*. Let not the *World*, and the *God of this World*, have you at *command*; the *things* that *their attendants* take up withall, are a *meer ſhew*, and are gone preſently. The Pſalmiſt ſpeaking of thoſe who only mind ſuch things as theſe, with great

great Aſſeveration tells us, *Pſal* 39.6. *Surely every Man walketh in a vain ſhew; ſurely they are diſquieted in vain*; and then adds, v. 7. *And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee.* Expectation from the Creature, he knew would be fruſtrated; but hope in God, he was well aſſured, would never make him aſhamed.

The Arguments to perſwade to attend upon God, are theſe.

1. 'Tis *wonderful Condeſcenſion and Compaſſion in God, that he will admit of attendance by ſuch as you are.* Whoſe Eye, but *Gods*, ſees the *whole* of Sins *evil?* The Lord alone does fully underſtand his *own goodneſs, and glorious Perfections and Excellencies*, therefore he alone fully underſtands *Sins ſinfulneſs*, which is ſo contrary to him. The Pſalmiſt tells us, *He is not a God that hath pleaſure in wickedneſs, neither ſhall evil dwell with him*, Pſal. 5. 4. When he prohibits Sin, he ſpeaks with great concernedneſs, *Jer.* 44. 4. *Oh do not this abominable thing which I hate.* You may perceive by his words, that his very *Soul* does *abhor* Iniquity; 'tis therefore matter of Aſtoniſhment, that God ſhould have any thing to do in a way of Mercy with Man who is ſo *abominably guilty and defiled.* What is there in Man by Nature to commend him

to

to God? The Apoſtle charges the *whole World as guilty before God*, and proves *Heart* and *Tongue*, and *Hands* and *Feet* of Man to be *corrupt*; and *that the way of Peace he knows not*, Rom. 3. 17. Why ſhould ſuch a Wretch be look'd upon, and graciouſly called upon to return? Here is indeed *Eternal Miſery* that Man is in danger of, for *Divine Mercy* to prevent? Here is a *great deal of Sin* for the *juſtifying Righteouſneſs* of a Mediator to *cover*: Here are *Heart-Plagues* for *Chriſt* the Phyſician of Souls to *heal*: Here is *Stubbornneſs and Obſtinacy* in evil, for the *Spirit* of Grace to *overcome*: Here are *innumerable wants*, for the All-ſufficient God to *ſupply*: But not the leaſt jot of *meritorious Worthineſs*. Will the Lord admit ſuch as we are, *indigent*, *worthleſs*, *vile*? Let us *wonder* that he *will do it*, and keep no longer at a diſtance from him.

2. Remember God *refuſes to be attended upon by multitudes of fallen Creatures, which at firſt were better than Man.* We read that *Man was made a little lower than the Angels*, Pſal. 8. 5. ſo that the Angels were in degree higher than Man in their firſt Creation: Now a great Hoſt of theſe Angels ſinned, and when they ſinned they were not *ſpared*, 2 Pet. 2. 4. as ſoon as they fell into

into Sin, they were thrown down and fell into *Hell.* The Lord calls not to the *Apoſtate Angels* to repent of ſin and return to himſelf: There is *no Throne of Grace* for *them* to come to, no *Mercy offered*, the *door of hope* is *lock'd up* and *faſt barr'd* againſt *them for ever.* Our Lord *took not on him the Nature of Angels*, Heb. 2. 16. The good Angels were indeed confirmed in their good State, in their original Integrity, by the Son of God, who is the *Head* of all *Principality and Power*, Col. 2. 10. But the Son of God redeemed and recovered not ſo *much as one* of the *bad Angels*, but they are all in *Chains of darkneſs reſerved unto Judgment.* Theſe reprobate Angels are of very *great Capacity*, they *excel in ſtrength*, yet the Lord will *accept of no ſervice* at *their* hands: He forces them againſt their wills to be ſubſervient to his purpoſes and pleaſure, but Worſhip and Obedience from them he admits not of. But he calls after Man *to return*, though *fallen by his iniquity*, Hoſ. 14. 1. He puts *words* into Man's *Mouth*, and tells him what he *ſhould ſay*, and what he himſelf is ready to *hearken to* and *grant*, Hoſ. 14. 2. *Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, ſay unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly: So will we render the calves of*

*our*

*our lips.* This great difference which Grace does make between fallen Man, and fallen Angels, ſhould be a mighty Inducement and Encouragement to Man, to give moſt ready attendance upon God.

3. 'Tis the *great endeavour of your Spiritual Enemies to hinder your attendance upon God, or to diſturb you in it:* Which ſhews they are well aware how *beneficial* this attendance, if ſerious, would be; and they *envy* you the *benefit* of it. 'Tis Wiſdom [*ab horte doceri*] well to mark, and to receive *ſome inſtruction from an Enemy.* What *Satan* urges you to purſue, you may conclude is of *little worth*; his Malignity is ſuch, that he will not truly conſult your intereſt. And ſince he uſes ſo *many Methods*, and ſo *much Subtlety*, to *ſtave you off from God*, you may reaſonably argue, that in coming to God, lies your Duty and your Bleſſedneſs. The Enemy of our Salvation has *falſe glaſſes*, through which he miſrepreſents *the Lord* and his *Service* to us. Sometimes he repreſents him as ſo *High*, that he *minds not what we do*, whether it be good or evil: Sometimes he ſets him forth as ſo *indulgent*, that any *careleſs Duties* will pleaſe him; and *neglect of his Service* will not *much*, if at *all*, provoke him. Sometimes he ſets before Man's Eyes God's

Wrath and Jealouſie, and ſays, that *delays* to ſerve him, have rendred him *unintreatable*; and that to ſeek him, is now *too late and in vain*. Thus he would obſtruct Man's attendance on his Maker, for he knows that *the Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the Soul that ſeeketh him*, Lam. 3. 25. and thoſe that *are far from God ſhall periſh*, Pſal. 73. 27.

But if by all theſe ways he cannot *hinder* attendance upon God, he will endeavour to *diſturb* them that do attend, *Zach.* 3. 1. *And he ſhewed me* Joſhua *the high Prieſt ſtanding before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan ſtanding at his right hand to reſiſt him.* How *buſie* is Satan about us, when we come to appear before God! He endeavours to fill the *Mind* with *vain Imaginations*; to *thruſt violently* the *World* into the Heart; to make *indwelling ſin active*; to *hinder the actings of Grace*; He endeavours *to batter Faith*, to *beat down Hope*, and to *damp holy and ſpiritual Affections:* He cannot endure the Soul ſhould meet with God in Duties, he is troubled at its Communion with God, and being bleſs'd with Spiritual Bleſſings. But all this ſhould but *quicken your deſires and diligence in ſeeking*; for what you ſeek after, you may conclude is *highly worth finding*.

4 How

4. How *empty are all things that are apt to draw you away from attending upon God!* The Egyptians of old were derided by the Poet, becauſe they made Gods of every thing.

*O Sanctas Gentes, quibus hoc naſcuntur in hortis.*
Numina.

The very *Herbs and Plants* that grew in their Gardens were *deified.* And truly among many that are called Chriſtians, a multitude of things that are very *mean and low* are *idolized:* Some make Idols of their *Garbs*, by affecting and being proud of them: Some idolize their *earthly Treaſures*, and *ſenſual Pleaſures*, by *loving thoſe more than God*, 2 Tim. 3. 4. Some make their *Belly* their God, and how many *Meat-offerings*, and *Drink-offerings* are ſacrificed to *this baſe Deity* by the *Wine-bibbers* and *riotous eaters of fleſh!* How low is *Man fallen!* How has he loſt his *Dominion over the Creature!* They make him not only their *Slave*, but their *Worſhipper.* But pray bethink your ſelves, and take notice what things they are that thus captivate, and draw you away from God. Such is the *immenſity of God*, that the whole World compared with him, is not ſo much as the

*ſmalleſt Duſt* to the *Globe of Earth*, not ſo much as *a drop of Water* to the *whole Ocean*. And as the *Being* of God tranſcends all *other Beings*, ſo his *goodneſs excels all created goodneſs*. So that our Lord ſpeaking in the *higheſt ſenſe*, affirms, *That there is none good but one, that is God*, Matt. 19. 17. What then are the *good things* of this World, which *Sin* has brought a *Vanity*, nay a *Curſe* upon? and which are uſed by *Satan* as his *great Baits* to *catch inconſiderate Souls*, that they may be loſt and ruin'd?

5. Be prevailed with to attend upon God, *who is the ſtrongeſt Rock, the ſureſt Refuge*. Safety is deſirable, conſidering what *precious Souls* all are intruſted with; and how full of *Enemies and Snares* this *World* is, in which we live: But the Lord alone is he, of *whom Safety* is, *Pſal.* 18. 31. *Who is God ſave the Lord? and who is a Rock ſave our God?* Sincere attenders upon God are very dear to him, they are called his *peculiar Treaſure*, Exod. 19. 5. *Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then ſhall ye be unto me a peculiar Treaſure above all People*. They are called his *Jewels*, Mal. 3. 17. *They ſhall be mine ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, in that day when I make up my Jewels, and I will ſpare them, as a Man ſpareth his own Son that ſerveth him.*

Nay,

Nay, *he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his Eye*, Zech. 2. 8. Therefore he *will keep them as the apple of the Eye, he will hide them under the ſhadow of his wings*, Pſal. 17. 8. When you attend upon God, you repair to a Rock of Salvation, to an high Tower of defence: With his *favour he will compaſs you as with a Shield*, Pſal. 5. 12. He *will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings* you may ſecurely *truſt*; *for his truth ſhall be your buckler*, Pſal. 91. 4. In the *hollow of his hand* you ſhall be *hid*; and the *ſame hand* ſhall *beat down all your Enemies* that deſign your Deſtruction: You ſhall *dwell on high, your place ſhall be the munitions of Rocks*, Iſa. 33. 16. No Rock ſo high, ſo firm as God; no Munition ſo ſafe, the Refuge is eternal. When *David* ſays, *Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock, be not ſilent to me*, Pſal. 28. 1. 'Tis ſignified that this Rock can *hear*, and *anſwer*, and *help abundantly*, and afford abundant matter for *thankſgiving*, Pſal. 18. 46. *The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my Rock, and let the God of my Salvation be exalted.*

6. That God whom you attend upon, *can abundantly ſatisfie the very Soul of Man.* When the Soul has *wearied* it ſelf with ſeeking ſatisfaction from the Creature, and is *ſorrowful* becauſe its labour has been in

vain. God can *ſay and do* what *Creatures cannot*. Jer. 31. *I have ſatiated the weary Soul, and I have repleniſhed every ſorrowful Soul.* The *Negative* Happineſs is conſiderable, in being ſecured from Evil and Miſery; but *poſitive Bleſſedneſs* is more, in being ſatisfied and delighted with Divine Goodneſs, *Pſal.* 65. 4. *Bleſſed is the Man whom thou chooſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts: we ſhall be ſatisfied with the goodneſs of thy Houſe, even of thy holy Temple.* That *rich Man* in the Goſpel, ſpeaks as if he had, like *Nebuchadnezzar*, the *Heart of a Beaſt*, rather than the *Soul of a Man:* When he ſays, *Soul thou haſt Goods laid up for many years, take thine eaſe, eat and drink and be merry*, Luke 12. 19. This was but *ſorry proviſion* for an *immortal Soul*, that was *juſt ready to be required at his hand*; to leave all theſe things behind it, and to go into Eternity. Attenders upon God find that in him, with which their Souls are ſatisfied indeed: They are ſatisfied with *his Mercy and Love in Chriſt:* They are ſatisfied in *Chriſt's Sacrifice*, and the *Satisfaction he has made* for Iniquity: They are ſatisfied when they perceive themſelves *changed more and more into the Image of God*; and what a Satisfaction is it to *converſe*

*above*, and to *ſit in heavenly places!* Eph. 2. 6. *And hath raiſed us up together, and hath made us ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.* And what a Satisfaction is it at *preſent*, to be aſſured of a far *fuller* Satisfaction *hereafter!* Pſal. 17. 15. *As for me I ſhall behold thy face in righteouſneſs, I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs.*

7. Attend upon God, for he has *long waited that he might be gracious to you.* How has that Scripture been fulfilled, *Iſa.* 13. 18. *And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.* He has ſtood at the door, and has knock'd for entrance, and though that has been denied him, he has not gone away as he might, in juſt Anger, but *behold he ſtands at the door ſtill*, Rev. 3. 20. If you *hear his voice, and open the door*, he will *enter* and *dwell* with you, and *he and his Benefits* ſhall be *yours.* It is well for ſinful Man, that God is Patient and Long-ſuffering, he does not ceaſe calling at Man's *firſt Deafneſs* to his call; he does not ceaſe offering Grace, Mercy and Life, upon Man's *firſt refuſing* to accept what is offered. He told the old World, that his *Spirit ſhould not always ſtrive with Man*, Gen. 6. 3. yet 'tis added, *his days ſhall be an hundred and twenty years.*

All that time the *Long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of* Noah, *while the Ark was a preparing*, 1 Pet. 3. 20. to ſee if the Diſobedient would return to him. The Lord comes *year after year to the barren Fig-tree ſeeking Fruit*, but he *found* none; whereupon he ſays, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* Yet *upon Interceſſion* made, he is prevailed with to *ſpare it longer*, to ſee if means that were uſed, might be effectual to make it fruitful, *Luke* 13. 6, 9. The Apoſtle tells, that *the Lord is long ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. Oh repent of your *forgetting God*, and your *duty towards him days without number*, attend and ſeek unto him in Sincerity, who has had *many a long look for you*, and has waited ſo great a while for your return.

c. Conſider ſeriouſly *how God is attended upon in Heaven, and what an Honour it is to you to wait upon him.* He has *thouſand thouſands that miniſter unto him, ten thouſand times ten thouſand that ſtand before him*, Dan. 7. 10. He has *Angels that excel in ſtrength*, who ſurround his Throne, that are ready *to do his Commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word*, Pſal. 103. 20. The Seraphims worſhip him with *covered faces*, to ſhew their *great reverence* of God, and

and how they are *raviſhingly overcome with the brightneſs of his Majeſty*; and they *cry out one to another, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole Earth*, as well as Heaven, *is full of his Glory*, Iſa. 6. 2, 3. Theſe *Angels are Spirits, theſe Miniſters* likened to *a flame of fire*, Pſal. 104. 4. How Sublime and Spiritual are their Praiſes! How ardent their Love to the Lord whom they praiſe and ſerve! And yet the Lord is ſaid to *humble himſelf*, when he takes notice of ſuch Attendants as theſe. 'Tis certainly an high Honour that is done you, when you are admitted into the preſence of ſuch a glorious Majeſty; he that ſits upon a Throne of Grace, and is ſo ready to pitty, pardon, heal, help and ſave, *is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only hath Immortality, dwelling in that light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath ſeen, nor can ſee; to whom be Honour and Power everlaſting, Amen*, 1 Tim. 6. 15, 16. If this glorious God will accept of Service from ſuch as you, how readily ſhould you give it! How highly are you favoured when you come into his Preſence, and have Communion with him!

9. Lay this to Heart, that *Not to attend upon God, is wickedly to contemn him,*

*and*

*and to rebel againſt him.* 'Tis in effect to ſay, He is *not worthy of your Service*; and that the Service of *your Luſts*, and of the World, is more *beneficial.* Thus God was deſpiſed by thoſe wicked Men that were infatuated by Proſperity in an evil way. They ſaid *Job* 21. 15. *What is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him? And what Profit ſhould we have if we pray to him?* When *Saul* refuſed to obey the Command of God, *Samuel* rejects his *Sacrifices*, and charges him with *Rebellion*, *which is as Witchcraft*, 1 Sam. 15. 22, 23. *Behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of Rams; for Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, and Stubbornneſs is as Iniquity and Idolatry.* When thou caſteſt off the *Service* of God, thou *caſteſt off his Fear*, and *diſowneſt God himſelf:* This is Rebellion, and *this Rebellion* is *thy Witchcraft*, thy *Confederacy with the Devil*; thou makeſt a *Covenant with Death, and with Hell thou art at an Agreement.*

USE III. Shall be of *Direction*, *How* God ſhould be attended upon. There muſt not be only a ſeeking of God, but a *due Order* in ſeeking him; if *this* be wanting, inſtead of receiving *Benefits* from his hand, that hand may make *a breach* upon us,

us, 1 *Chron.* 15. 13. *The Lord our God made a breach upon us, because we sought him not after the due order.* If we have *no care*, as to the *manner* of our Services, the Lord will care as *little* for the *matter* of them. Now the right manner of attending upon God, is to be declared in these particulars.

1. Our attendance upon God must be *present*; our living without God so long, and contemptuous neglect of our required Duty towards him, should be matter of deep Humiliation; and 'tis but reasonable to judge our selves worthy of *Frowns* and Rejection, because we *sought his face no sooner.* But now immediately we must *gird up the loynes of our Minds* to his Work. The Holy Ghost bids us *hear his voice to day*; he tells us, that the *accepted* time is *now.* The Psalmist is a Pattern worthy of Imitation, for his *present harkening* to the Voice of God, and his *speediness* in yielding Obedience, *Psal.* 119. 60. *I made haste and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.* Delays are *displeasing* to God, for they argue the Heart not *so well reconciled* to *Him* and to his *Precepts*, and that *some other business* is *liked* and *preferred before his work.* And these delays are *dangerous*, considering the *uncertainty* of our *lifes continuance*, and how

how *ſoon and ſuddenly* the *Spirit* of the Lord being *grieved* by our *deferring* to *obey* his *motions*, and *accept* of his *gracious Aid*, may *totally* and *finally withdraw* from us.

2. Our Attendance upon God muſt be *inſtant*, Rom. 12. 12. *continuing* inſtant *in prayer*. So Act. 26. 7. *Unto which promiſe our twelve Tribes inſtantly ſerving God day and night, hope to come.* When we are thus inſtant in our attending, it implies a ſenſe of the great *importance* of thoſe things we come to God about; and that we are *very urgent* with him, that we may not *miſcarry* in our *everlaſting concernments*. Matters of *Life* and *Death temporal*, are managed with great ſeriouſneſs. But when we attend upon God, *Eternal Life* is before us, to be *laid hold on*; and *Eternal Death* is before us to *eſcape*. Our intenſeneſs and urgency *here*, ſhould if it were poſſible, as *far exceed* our *ſeriouſneſs* in other matters; as *Time* in length is exceeded by *Eternity*. As the *loudeſt Thunder* drowns a *whiſper*, ſo ſhould the *grand concerns* of the *unſeen Eternal World*, when we come before God, be *carefully regarded* before the *petty matters* of this *preſent Life*, which are but for a *moment*.

3. Our

3. Our Attendance upon God muſt be *conſtant*. Paroxiſms and Fits in Religion argue an *unhealthy Soul*; to be *ſometimes hot*, and *ſometimes cold*, is a *bad temper*. They that grow weary of God and of his Service, God is weary of them and their Duties. The Lord ſpeaks to *Ephraim* and *Judah*, as one wearied, becauſe all the means and methods he had uſed, had been *ineffectual* unto any *laſting* Reformation; if at any time they *ſeemed inclinable* to what was good, the inclination was very *ſhort-lived*, and they *ſoon returned* to their *natural bent and inclination to Evil*, Hoſ. 6. 4. *O* Ephraim *what ſhall I do unto thee? O* Judah *what ſhall I do unto thee? for your goodneſs is as a morning Cloud, and as the early Dew it goeth away.* 'Tis not enough to *begin well*. The ſame argument that perſwaded you to *begin*, will become *ſtronger* for your *holding on*. It *were better not to have known the way of Righteouſneſs, than having known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered to you*, 2 Pet. 2. 21. All that come to God ſhould *cleave* unto him; all that embrace his Teſtimonies, ſhould ſtick unto thoſe Teſtimonies: *I have ſtuck unto thy Teſtimonies*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 119. 31. and *ver.* 112. *I have inclined my Heart to perform thy Statutes always, even unto the end.*

4. Our

4. Our Attendance upon God muſt be *cordial and hearty*, 1 Chron. 22. 19. *Now ſet your Heart and your Soul to ſeek the Lord your God.* The full bent of the Mind muſt be this way. The Lord will not be found, unleſs the Heart and Soul be ſet to ſeek him. Naturally the Heart of Man is ſet another way, being of a corrupt Original, *from the Womb 'tis eſtranged from God*, and ſtill 'tis farther alienating and eſtranging it ſelf: 'tis not eaſie to have ſuch a Heart reconciled to God, and to the Will of God: But when the Heart is renewed, the enmity is in a great meaſure cured; the Heart is now *willing* to *come* into the *Lord's Preſence*; for when the *Heart ſerves* him, 'tis in the way to be *ſatiated* by him. The Heart-ſearcher *cannot bear* the Heart's abſence; for if He has not the Heart, ſomething elſe has it, which *provokes him unto Jealouſie*. But the more there is of the Heart in Duties, God is the better pleaſed with them, and the performers find them in a ſpiritual ſenſe *more advantageous*. When *Hearts* knock at *Heaven gate*, the Gate ſhall certainly be open. When Souls Thirſt for God they ſhall not fail of *ſatisfaction*, Pſal. 63. 5. *My Soul ſhall be ſatisfied as with Marrow and Fulneſs, my Mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful Lips.*

5. Our

5. Our Attendance upon God muſt be *with clean Hands and a pure Heart.* Jam. 4. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you; Cleanſe your Hands ye ſinners, purifie your Hearts ye double-minded.* So Pſal. 24. 3,4. *Who ſhall aſcend into the Hill of the Lord? and who ſhall ſtand in his holy place? He that hath clean Hands, and a pure Heart.* The Goſpel ſtrictly commands *good works*, without theſe Faith is dead and vain, and Love is only a ſeeming Fire. The Apoſtle ſpeaks with great vehemency, Tit. 3. 8. *This is a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly; that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.* Our Lord owns them for his *near and dear kindred*, who are *doers* of his Father's *Work and Will*, Mat. 12. 50. *He ſtretched forth his Hand towards his Diſciples, and ſaid, behold my Mother and my Brethren. For whoſoever ſhall do the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, the ſame is my Brother, and Siſter, and Mother.* Attenders upon God muſt not allow themſelves in the doing of Evil: *Fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of Darkneſs*, and *Fellowſhip with God*, are *inconſiſtent*, 1 Joh. 1. 6. *If we ſay we have Fellowſhip with him, and walk in Darkneſs, we ly, and do not the truth.* Unleſs there be a *living to God*, ſerving of him

him in *Ordinances* is of *no account* with him.

And as Hands muſt be cleanſed, ſo the Hearts of Attenders on *God* muſt be *pure*. The Heart muſt not defile it ſelf by *regarding any iniquity*, ſo as to be *unwilling* to have it ſubdued. Pſal. 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Regarded *iniquity* will cry ſo loud for a *denial*, that Prayer will find *no Audience*. The Heart muſt not pollute it ſelf by *love to the World*; for if this *love* prevail, there can neither be any *true love* to the Father, nor any Intereſt in the *Father's love*, 1 Joh. 2. 15, *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World; if any Man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him.* The Heart muſt conſent to the *crucifixion* of all the *affections and luſts of the Fleſh*. It muſt not be δίψυχος, *double-minded*, on and off with God; but ſteddy and right with him. Its reſolution muſt be to be *holy ſtill*, and its deſire to be *ſtill holy more and more*, to have *holineſs perfected in the fear of* God.

6. Our Attendance upon God *muſt be with Humility, Fear, and Faith, without wrath and doubting.* Humility becomes the *very Angels*, for all their excellency is derived; and they are *charged with* poſſible *folly*,

*folly*, Job 4.18. 'tis owing to the *Election* and *confirming Grace* of God, that ſome Angels ſtood, when others being *left to the freedom of their own Will*, apoſtatized. How humble ſhould the Children of Men be, who are fallen by their Iniquity! The beſt of Saints have reaſon to be low in their own Eyes, conſidering how *many Talents* they owed before they were *ſatisfied for*, and *paid* by their *Surety*; and how apt they are *ſtill* to treſpaſs. It may be ſaid of the ſtrongeſt Chriſtian, *ſtand* he *could not*, *ſtand* he *would not*, were he not *upheld* by the Lord's *free and mighty Spirit*.

But an humble Senſe of our Worthleſneſs and ill-deſerving, ſhould not *hinder* the acting of our *Faith in Jeſus* when we come before the Lord. Our great Redeemer has *bought us* with a *Price*, and he has *bought all things* for us: We *our ſelves* are his Purchaſe, and *ſo* is *all that Grace* we *need*, and all *that Glory* we *hope for*. God has made a *Covenant* with *Chriſt*, and has promiſed to give *us* to him for his *Inheritance and Poſſeſſion*. Pſal. 2.8. *Ask of me, and I ſhall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the Earth for thy Poſſeſſion*. And to be *Chriſt's Inheritance and Poſſeſſion*, implies our being *ſeparated* from the World, our being *ſecured*,

our being *made fruitful*, and our *eternal continuing* to be *enjoyed* by him, and to *enjoy* him. Promiſes of all, and eſpecially of the *beſt Bleſſings*, are made to us for Chriſt's ſake, and he will *ſee* to the *making of them good*; becauſe the accompliſhment of them, is ſo much for the *Father's Glory*, as well as our trueſt Welfare. All this may exceedingly ſtrengthen and raiſe our Confidence and Hope when we attend on God.

*Doubts* concerning our *ſpeeding* ſhould be look'd upon as unreaſonable, when we come in ſuch a *prevailing Name* as *Chriſt's*, unto *his Father* and *our Father*, *his God* and *our God*, and we ask *only for things agreeable to his Will*, 1 John 5. 14, 15. *And this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us, we know that we have the Petition we deſired of him.*

And as Faith is oppoſed to doubting, ſo to *wavering*, James 1. 6, 7. *But let him ask in Faith nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a Wave of the Sea driven with the Wind and toſſed: For let not that Man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord.* He is the *wavering Man*, whoſe Mind hangs doubtful and unreſolved, between God and the World, Chriſt and Satan,

Satan, Sin and Holineſs: Such an Attender upon God, who is *more inclined* to ſerve *other Lords*, ſhall certainly be rejected.

Finally, The Apoſtle forbids not only Doubting but *Wrath* alſo, 1 *Tim* 2.8. *I will therefore that Men pray every where, lifting up holy hands without Wrath or Doubting.* The Wrath of Man *worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God*; nay, it cauſes an *abounding in Tranſgreſſion.* The *Leaven* of *Anger* and *Malice* is diligently to be *ſearched for*, and *purged out*, as that, which if it remains, will prove us *carnal*, 1 Cor. 3. 3. *For whereas there is among you Envying and Strife, and Diviſions, Are ye not carnal and walk as Men?* Civil Diſcords, Church-Diviſions, unruly Paſſions, ſhould be avoided with Care and Fear; we ſhould be *full of Holy Love* to all our Brethren; ready to *forgive* the greateſt *Injuries* and *Enemies*; forward to *purſue* and *promote Unity and Peace*, whenever we attend upon Him who has called himſelf the *God of Love and Peace.*

7. Our Attendance upon God ſhould be *with Gladneſs and Delight, and a ſenſe how good 'tis for us to approach his preſence.* Where the Will of God is *beſt done*, and that is in *Heaven*, there is the *greateſt Joy* in the *doing* of it. The *cheerful joyful* Ser-

vant is a *Credit* to his *Work*, honours his *Lord*, and is a great *Eye-ſore* to the *evil one*; for Satan is very much afraid, leſt the Attenders upon God being full of Gladneſs, *others* ſhould be induced to try that Work and Service, which *theſe* find ſo exceeding *comfortable*. Hypocrites, that go no further than the *out-ſide* of Religion, count it *wearieſome* becauſe they do *not underſtand* it. But as God *takes pleaſure in the Upright*, ſo the Upright find the *trueſt Pleaſure in God*, and in his *Ways*. The Pſalmiſt ſpeaks upon *very good ground*, Pſal. 32. 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce ye Righteous, and ſhout for joy all ye that are upright in heart.* The Man after *God's own Heart* ſaid, that the *Meditations of God are ſweet*, Pſal. 104. 34. *He was glad when they ſaid to him, let us go into the Houſe of the Lord*, Pſal. 122. 1. He tells us *who* is the Man that may *have* what he *will*, all his deſire granted; 'tis he whoſe delight is in God, *Pſal.* 37. 4. *Delight thy ſelf in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſire of thy Heart.* He is the *bleſſed Man* who takes no pleaſure in the *counſel, way*, or ſeemingly *eaſieſt Seat* of the Wicked; but *his delight is in the Law of the Lord*, Pſal. 1. 1, 2. And why ſhould *he* not with *delight* be ſerved at *preſent?* ſince in his *Kingdom*, by *all* he will be praiſed with the *higheſt Rapture of Joy for ever!*

8. Our

8. Our Attendance upon God, ſhould be *in all Ordinances.* It is produced as an Argument, that that *excellent couple* mentioned *Luke* 1. 6. were *both righteous before God*, becauſe *they walked in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs.* Under the *Old Teſtament* there was an Ordinance of God that was to be adminiſtred *betimes*, even to the *Infants*, and that was *Circumciſion*; and though *Abraham*, at the *firſt Inſtitution* of this Ordinance, believed and was circumciſed at *Age*, as alſo were the Men of his Houſhold; and though Circumciſion is called a *Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith*, Rom. 4. 11. Yet *Infants* alſo were *circumciſed*, theſe *little ones* are ſaid to enter into Covenant with the Lord their God, *Deut.* 29. 11, 12. Under the *New Teſtament* our Lord Jeſus does not *caſt* theſe *Infants* out of *his Church and Covenant*, but ſays, *Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of ſuch is the Kingdom of God*, Mark 10. 14. The Apoſtle *Peter*, after he had exhorted to *Baptiſm*, ſays, *The Promiſe is unto you and to your Children*, Acts 2. 39. And the Apoſtle *Paul* affirms, That the *Children* of Believing Parents are *Holy*, 1 Cor. 7. 14. they are therefore *Members* of the *Body of Chriſt.* Now 'tis plainly ſignified, that *Baptiſm* is

the *Privilege* of *all* in *that Body*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. *We are all baptized into one Body.*

Indeed ſome that mind the *Sound* of Scripture more than the *Senſe* of it, when they read, *Repent and be baptized, Believe and be baptized*, conclude that none but thoſe that are at Age, and capable of profeſſing their Faith and Repentance, ought to partake of this Ordinance. But they would do well to conſider, *who theſe were* that in Scripture *repented, believed, and were baptized*, they were either * *Jews or Heathens* that were converted to the *Chriſtian Faith at Age*; and if *thouſands of ſuch ſhould be converted now*, now alſo *at Age* Baptiſm *ought to be adminiſtred* to them, upon their *repenting and believing*. But in the *whole New Teſtament* we do not find *any baptized at Age*, whoſe *Parents were Chriſtians at their Birth:* Yet ſeveral without Scripture warrant are thus baptized at this day.

* Under the Name of Jews, I take in all Proſelytes to the Jewiſh Religion.

Oh that there were leſs diſputing about *Infant-Baptiſm*, and more care to *improve it!* All *Infants* that *go to Heaven*, are *baptized with the Blood and Spirit of Chriſt*, they are *juſtified and ſanctified thereby.* This Juſtification and Sanctification, all that have been baptized, ſhould deſire to partake of.

Other

Other Ordinances alſo ſhould be engaged in, for the Lord who has inſtituted them, is ready to *own* and *bleſs* them, and *himſelf to be found* in them. Who that is *wiſe*, would neglect any *one* of them, ſince none of them are appointed in vain; nay, every one of them to *ſerious engagers* has been experienced *abundantly Beneficial?* The Lord is to be attended upon, *how* and in *what way ſoever* he pleaſes; in the *Cloſet*, in the *Family*, in the *Sanctuary*, at the *Table*, or any *other way* that *he* has ordained; *Bleſſed are all they that wait for him.*

9. Every *Attendance upon God ſhould make every Attender better.* 'Tis thought by ſome, that Creatures in the Waters, as long as they live, they grow ſtill greater; Saints, as long as they live, ſhould ſtill be growing in Grace, and be more full of all Goodneſs; *They ſhould grow as the Lilly, caſt forth their roots as* Lebanon, *their branches ſhould ſpread, and their beauty be as the Olive-tree*, Hoſ. 14. 5, 6. God is ready to be *as the dew to them*, that from *Him their Fruit may be found.* It is really a fault in Believers, if *every time* they wait upon the Lord, they come not away from him with *more Wiſdom*, *Strength*, and *Grace*, and *Peace*, than they had, ſince he is ready to impart ſuch Bleſſings as

these, and *gives them Liberally without upbraiding.*

USE IV. Shall be of *Consolation* to them, that *thus, as I have directed,* do attend upon God, *Isa.* 40. 1. *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my People, saith your God*; with *Joy* you may come and *draw* most pure and refreshing *Waters out of the Wells of Salvation:* You are the *Children of Peace,* and the Peace of God is to *rest* upon you. For your Comfort take notice of these things following.

1. God puts an *high value upon his sincere Attendants.* He had a special *respect to Abel,* and that excellent Sacrifice that he offered. Though the *Heaven be his Throne,* and *the Earth his Foot-stool*; yet *to that Man will he look,* as being well pleased with him, that is, *Poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and that trembles at his Word,* Isa. 56. 1, 2. He remembers the *kindness of their Youth,* the *love of their Espousals,* Jer. 2. 2. and their willing Consecration of themselves to be *Holiness* to the Lord. He has taken notice of all their Desires and Groans, and their Cries to *himself,* and their frequent *speaking one to another,* that they might confirm and encourage one another in the worst of Times and Trials, to continue his Attendants

dants ſtill. *Mal.* 3. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard,* and did ſo well approve them, *that a Book of Remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.*

2. God *delights over his ſincere Attendants to do them good.* He takes *pleaſure in the Proſperity of his Servants,* they are in *Heavineſs by Affliction,* only when there is *need of it*; he delights eſpecially to ſee their *Souls proſper:* As he opens his *Armory,* and brings forth the *Weapons* of his Indignation againſt the *Wicked*; ſo he opens his *Treaſures of Bounty and Goodneſs* to his *Servants,* that they may be ſupplied abundantly. He does them good with a *good Will,* his *whole Heart and Soul* is with them, *Jer.* 32. 41. when his hand is open to them. He is ready to fulfil their Deſires, to grant their Requeſts: Nay, when their *Thoughts* are moſt *Comprehenſive,* and they *crave never ſo much*; he is able and ready to do for them ὑπὲρ ἐκ περισσοῦ, *exceeding abundantly more,* Eph. 3. 20. Who can conceive how beneficial waiting upon God is! That paſſage is both encouraging and amazing, *Iſa* 64. 4. *For ſince the beginning of the World, Men have not heard, nor perceived by the Ear, neither hath the Eye ſeen, O God, beſides thee,*

*what*

*what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.*

3. God is ready to *cover a multitude of Infirmities in them that ſincerely attend upon him.* He mercifully obſerves how *willing their Spirits* are, when their *Fleſh is weak*, and cannot *keep pace* with their *renewed Minds.* When our Lord was in an Agony, his Diſciples could *not watch with him one hour*, but were fallen aſleep; yet he himſelf graciouſly excuſes it, *Matt.* 26. 41. *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Fleſh is weak*, and paſſes it by. He takes notice of the *Luſtings of the Spirit againſt the Fleſh*, the Strivings of Grace againſt Sin and Corruption; and paſſes by *the Luſting of the Fleſh againſt the Spirit*, the Strivings of Sin againſt Grace. The Lord does *not enter into Judgment* with his Servants, nor deal in *Rigour* with them; but he expreſſes *Fatherly Tenderneſs* and *Compaſſion* towards them, *Pſal.* 103. 13. *Like as a Father pitti-eth his Children, ſo the Lord pittieth them that fear him.* We are directed to beg for the *Forgiveneſs of Treſpaſſes daily*, which ſhews, that as the Diſciples of Chriſt *daily offend*, ſo their Heavenly Father is ready to *grant forgiveneſs daily* to them: Nay, *Iniquity cleaves* unto our *holieſt things*; our *beſt Duties* ſhould and might be done

a great deal *better*. Theſe Infirmities then are much to be *lamented*, more and more ſtriven againſt; and ſeeing our ſelves *compaſſed about* with them, we ſhould *baniſh all Self-confidence*, and look into Jeſus, that in him we may find acceptance; and certainly the *Righteouſneſs of Chriſt* the Son of God, and the *Father's love* in him, will *cover* the *greateſt multitude* of *bewailed* Infirmities and Offences.

4. It may be alſo Comfort to Attenders upon God, *to think whom they have attending upon them.* Saints on Earth have *the Angels* in Heaven to be their *Guardians*. Chriſt is ſignified by *Jacob's Ladder*; the *Angels of God* are ſaid *to aſcend and deſcend upon the Son of Man*, John 1. 51. 'Tis *owing* to our *Lord Jeſus*, that *Believers* have the *Benefit* of the *Angels Miniſtry*; and the Apoſtle ſignifies, that *all* of them are thus employed for the Saints Protection and Security, Heb. 1. 14. *Are they not all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them that ſhall be heirs of Salvation?* The *reprobate* and *evil Angels reſiſt* Attenders upon God; but the *elect* and *good Angels* are their Friends: Theſe Angels that excel in ſtrength, How do they *rejoyce* when any repent and are converted! And they have a Charge over Converts *to keep them in all*

*their*

*their ways*, Pſal. 91. 11. and when 'tis added v. 13. *Thou ſhalt tread upon the Lion and the Adder; the young Lion and the Dragon thou ſhalt trample under feet.* It may be intimated, that Satan's Force, and Fury, and Subtlety, ſhall be ineffectual, and that by his Temptations he ſhall not prevail. But though Angels attend the Servants of God, they are not *wholly truſted* to the *Angelical Care.* The *Lord himſelf* is *their Keeper:* The *Father and the Son come to them and make their abode in them,* and will *ſecure* their *own Manſions*, till they are *out of the reach* of Enemies, and *paſt all danger.*

5. Sincere Attendance upon God, *ſhall attend upon him after another and better manner, in another World.* They ſhall be *fitted for*, and *admitted* into the *preſence Chamber* of the *King of Glory.* In *Heaven* there will be *no need of the Sun or of the Moon to ſhine in it, for the Glory of the Lord does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*, Rev. 21. 23. and Rev. 22. 3. And *there ſhall be no more Curſe, but the Throne of God, and of the Lamb, ſhall be in it, and his Servants ſhall ſerve him.* They ſhall ſerve him, ſo as *never* in the *leaſt* to *diſſerve* him; they ſhall *do his Will*, and nothing *at all* contrary to it; there will be a Perfection of *Delight*, and *Reſt*, and *Peace*;

in

in the *Obedience* they ſhall yield, when they *reſt not day and night*, ſaying, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*, Rev. 4. 8. and Rev. 5. 13. *Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever!* All God's ſincere Attendants, are *now* advanced to *Prieſtly*, nay to *Kingly Dignity*; therefore they are called βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα, *a Royal Prieſthood*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Chriſt *has loved them and waſhed them from their ſins in his own Blood, and has made them Kings and Prieſts unto God and his Father*, Rev. 1. 5, 6. But hereafter they ſhall *inherit* and *poſſeſs* the *Kingdom prepared* for them, they ſhall all of them be actually crown'd with a *Crown of Life and Righteouſneſs*. And Oh what a joyful ſight will it be to behold *the Lord*, and *all his Saints glorified together* with him, *Col.* 3. 4. *When Chriſt who is our Life, ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in Glory.* Thus of the firſt Doctrine.

Doct. II. The ſecond Doctrine is this. *In attending upon God, we ſhould look upon him as the Lord, and ſerve him accordingly.* When God pronounced his *own Laws* with his *own Mouth* upon Mount *Sinai*, He thus begins, *I am the Lord*, Exod. 20 2. and this

was

was to *awe Iſrael* into Obedience. We read Deut 6.4. *Hear O Iſrael, the Lord our God is* one *Lord.* No other Lord is *his equal*; no Commands to be regarded like his *Commands.* None ſo worthy of ſervice as *He*; He muſt have attendance, who, or whatever is neglected, Pſal. 89. 6, 7. *Who in Heaven can be compared to the Lord? who among the Sons of the Mighty can be likened unto the Lord?* The *mightieſt Monarchs* upon Earth, the *higheſt Angels* in Heaven, are infinitely *below him*; therefore it follows, *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.* Holy *David* cries out, Pſal.8.1. *O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the Earth! who haſt ſet thy Glory above the Heavens!* He worſhipped and praiſed him, as the *higheſt Sovereign*, who *excelled all things* on Earth; and whoſe *Glory* the Heaven, though full of it, was *not able to contain*; and when he ſays *our* Lord, 'tis intimated that he was *truly his Servant* and Subject, and that he *gloried* in ſubjection to him.

In the handling of this Doctrine I ſhall Firſt, Shew you *how God is the* Lord.

Secondly, Manifeſt what *influence* and effect the *apprehenſion of his being* Lord, ſhould

ſhould have upon us when we attend upon him.

Thirdly and Laſtly, *make Application.*

In the firſt place, I am to ſhew you *how God is the* Lord. His Majeſty may amaze us; when we think or ſpeak of his Dominion, we ſhould be ſtruck with godly Fear: Thus was the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. 104. 1. *O Lord my God, thou art very great, thou art cloathed with Honour and Majeſty, who covereſt thy ſelf with light as with a Garment,* Pſal. 96. 4, 6, 9. *For the* Lord *is great, and greatly to be praiſed; he is to be feared above all Gods. Honour and Majeſty are before him, Strength and Beauty are in his Sanctuary. O worſhip the* Lord *in the Beauty of Holineſs, fear before him all the Earth.* Now that you may the better underſtand *with whom* you have to do when you attend upon God. You muſt know,

1. God is *Lord Creator*; *of whom are all things.* The Man of God, *Moſes*, with *wonder and adoration* cries out, Pſal. 90. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the Earth or the World, even from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God.* The Lord was before all, and he was *all*, *of*, and *in*, and *to* himſelf *from Eternity.* The *Father* is of himſelf alone, the Son is neceſſarily

ceſſarily and eternally of the *Father*; and the Holy Ghoſt as neceſſarily and eternally from both the Father and the Son. And theſe *Three* are that *one living* and *true God* whom *Chriſtians believe in*, and in whoſe Name they *are baptized*. But though God neceſſarily is, yet Creatures are not ſo; but have their being at his pleaſure, Rev. 4.11. *Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive Glory and Honour, and Power, for thou haſt created all things*, and for thy pleaſure *they are and were created*.

It is the Lord, whoſe Word of Power and Command brought all things out of nothing at firſt, Heb.11.3. *Through Faith we underſtand that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God*. Though ſome have imagined that *Angels were created*, and *many* of them *fell*, long *before* this *viſible World* was *made*; in Scripture there is not ſufficient ground for ſuch an Imagination. It is probable thoſe excellent Creatures were made the *firſt day*; when 'tis ſaid *Gen.*1.1. *In the beginning God created the Heaven:* The Heaven may take in the *higheſt Heaven*, and the *Hoſt of Angels there*. Oh what a powerful Word was that which commanded Angels to *be*, which before were *nothing*, and gave them *Spiritual and Immortal Natures*, indued with ſuch *mighty*

*Strength*

*Strength and Underſtanding?* And when the Lord *laid the Foundations of the Earth*, and *ſtretched the line upon it*; theſe glorious Angels, called *Morning Stars*, *ſang together*, and *all theſe Sons of God ſhouted for joy*, Job 38. 4, 5, 7.

This Lord Creator did but ſay, *Let there be Light, and there was Light:* The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Earth and Seas, and all their Hoſts, were *what his Word made* them. And Man, who was to have Dominion over this lower World, God did make in his *own Image*, his Body indeed was *formed of the Duſt of the ground*; but to ſhew that his Soul was not of earthly Original, God is called the *Father* of Man's *Spirit*, he *breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul*, Gen. 2, 7. This *great Creator* whom we attend upon, made *all things very good*, Gen. 1. 31. and though Sin entring into the World, *ſpoiled much* of his *Workmanſhip*; he can eaſily *new make* what Sin has *marred*, and he can eaſily, and will certainly *deſtroy* thoſe who are *finally unwilling* to be made *new Creatures*.

2. God is *Lord, Preſerver of what himſelf has made.* The word of *his power ſuſtains all things*, Heb. 1, 3. it continues things in thoſe beings into which at firſt it brought them, *Pſal.* 148. 5, 6. *Let them praiſe the name of the Lord, for he commanded, and they were created. He hath alſo eſtabliſhed them for ever and ever: He hath made a Decree which ſhall not paſs.* The ſame Lord who called things out of nothing by his word, hinders their returning into nothing by the *ſame word of command*, Pſal. 33. 9 *For he*

*ſpake and it was done, he commanded and it ſtood faſt.* There is ſo much power exerted in upholding the Creation, that the *Preſervation* of the Univerſe is rightly called a *continued Creation* of it. If God ſhould *totally draw back* his *ſupporting hand*, all the *Luminaries* in Heaven would preſently *loſe their Light*, the *Earth and Seas* would become a *Chaos of Confuſion*; nay, Men and Angels, and all things elſe would immediately loſe their beings and become nothing.

As the Creation, ſo the Preſervation of all things is of the Lord alone, *Neh. 9. 6. Thou, even thou art Lord alone, thou haſt made Heaven the Heaven of Heavens with all their Hoſt, the Earth and all things that are therein, the Seas and all that is therein, and thou* preſerveſt *them all.* How worthy is he to be worſhipped by the Hoſt of Heaven, and by the Sons of Men the Inhabitants of the Earth! God is called שַׁדַּי Almighty or All-ſufficient, and שַׁד ſignifies *Mamma*, a *Pap* or *Breaſt*; all Creatures, from the mightieſt to the very meaneſt, do *hang* and *depend upon God*, as *Children* do upon the *Breaſts*, that he may nouriſh and ſuſtain them. And if God thus upholds all things, ſurely he will not fail to preſerve his *Church and Saints*, they may with Confidence attend upon him for defence, no *Humane* nor *Helliſh Force* ſhall prevail againſt them.

3. God is *Lord Proprietor and Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth.* So *Melchizedek* called the moſt high God, when he bleſſed *Abram* the Father of the Faithful, *Gen.* 14. 19. *Bleſſed be*

*be* Abram *of the moſt high God, the Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth.* Pſal. 24. 1. we read, *The Earth is the Lord's, and the fullneſs thereof; the World, and they that dwell therein.* All *Perſons* and *things* are properly God's *own*, and he may do with them what he pleaſes. By *Creation* the Lord *began*, and by *Preſervation* he *continues* to be the *Proprietor* of *all* things. Propriety is the ground of Power, and Power of Government; now a moſt abſolute and univerſal Propriety and Power, the Lord does rightly challenge to himſelf; he is *accountable to none*, not to be *reſiſted by any*; none *can ſtay his hand, or ſay to him, What doeſt thou?* It was a good anſwer that *Elihu* made to *Job*, Ch. 33. 12, 13. *God is greater than Man, Why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him? For he giveth not an account of any of his matters.*

It is a wiſe part to attend upon God, who has a *Propriety in us* and in *all* things beſides, and all things are really in his Hands and Poſſeſſion; ſo that he can *with-hold* or *beſtow* them according to his *own Will.* If God be *for us*, he can make *all things for us*; if he be againſt us, *nothing* ſhall be for our *help and benefit.* There is nothing which we need, but a *ſuper-abundance* of it, is in *God's hand.* The Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth has the *Bleſſings of Heaven and Earth to give forth.* Every *Beaſt of the Foreſt is his, and the Cattle upon a thouſand Hills,* Pſal. 50. 10. *All Sheep and Oxen, yea, and the Beaſts of the Field, the Fowl of the Air, and the Fiſh of the Sea, and whatever paſſeth through the paths of the Seas.* How eaſie is it for him to

provide things of this nature, who has *so much*, who has *all of them* in his *own keeping*? But far better Blessings than these he has in his hand to bestow; and of the *best Blessings he is most liberal*: When we *knock at his door*, we should remember how *rich he is*, whose *all things* are; and that this *Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him*, Rom. 10. 12.

4. God is *Lord Redeemer of his People*, and a mighty Lord indeed he shews himself in the Redemption of them, *Jer.* 50. 34. *Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his Name, he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to them.* Redemption *supposes* that *redeemed ones* were *enslaved, lost*, and *under a Curse*: To *redeem* must needs be granted an *high act* of *Mercy and Grace*, and of *force and might* likewise: The Lord is a Redeemer by *Power and Conquest*, he throws down the *Dominion of Sin*, demolishes its *strongest holds*, he *thrusts Mammon* out of the *Throne of the heart*, he *treads Satan* under his *Peoples feet*; in a Sense also he is a Redeemer by *Commutation*, God became Man, that he *might stand* in Man's *room, suffer in Man's nature*; and be Man's *Surety and Saviour*: And he redeems *by paying a price*, and that the Price might be of *infinite value*, he gave no *less* than *himself* for those whom he has redeemed, 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorifie God* which bought you, *in your Body and in your Spirit which are Gods*. And in *Gal.* 2. 20. *He loved me*, says the Apostle, *and gave himself for me*. The *Prey* and the *Captives*

*tives* are delivered out of the hands of that *terrible Enemy* the *Prince of Darkness*. Believers are redeemed from the *Curse of the Law* by him who was made *Flesh*, *Sin*, *and a Curse* for them. They may triumph indeed, because the *first death* is *unstung*, the *Grave* has lost its *Victory*, and *none* of them shall be seized and *hurt by the second death*. This Lord Redeemer, How should he be attended upon! How should *sinful and lost* Souls, before they are lost *past recovery*, being *sensible* of their *danger*, come *flocking* to *him* in *great numbers*, flying *as a Cloud*, *and as Doves to their Windows!*

5. God is *Lord and Law-giver*, and all are bound to obey those Laws he gives them. His Laws are the *best* that ever were given. In the keeping of these Laws lies *true Goodness*, and Sin, which is incomparably the foulest, and most pernicious, and worst of all Evils, is a *Transgression* of these Laws which God has delivered to us. How often in the *New Testament* do we read of the *Kingdom of God!* And *Kingdom* implies a *King* and *Laws*; and that there are *Subjects* who must *obey* the *one* and the *other*: The *Cross* of *Christ* excludes not *Christians Sufferings*, but *their* Sufferings are not *expiatory* of Sin, as *his were*; and the *Obedience* of Christ excludes not *Christians Obedience*; but *his* was *meritorious*, theirs *is not*. How *strictly* soever some may take the Gospel, and say 'tis *all Promises*; I am sure the Gospel, as it *represents* it self, *takes in Commands*. Christ is a *King* to be *obeyed*, as well as a *Propitiatory Sacrifice* to be *rested on*; and he *is the Author of*

*eternal Salvation to all them that obey him*; and they that *obey not the Goſpel*, which ſhews it has Laws to be obeyed, *ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*, Heb. 5. 9. 2 Theſſ. 1. 8, 9.

*Faith in Chriſt* does not make Believers *lawleſs*; nay, the Apoſtle ſpeaks with ſome vehemency, *Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid*; *yea, we eſtabliſh the Law*, Rom. 3. 31. Indeed we are not *under the Law*, i. e. under the *Curſe* of the Law, if we are true Believers; nor under it as a *Covenant*, *Do this and live*; we are not to *hope for Juſtification*, nor to *fear Condemnation* by it. But the *Law* is a *Rule* which we are bound to act and walk according to; and unto this Rule our Hearts and Lives, with great Care and Conſcience, ſhould be conformed. And that theſe Laws may be the better obſerved, the Lord and Law-giver muſt be more eyed. He takes notice *whether* we yield Obedience, and is moſt ready to *aſſiſt* us to obey: And he ſhould *always be ſet before us*, both as our *Obſerver* and our *Helper* too. *Pſal.* 16. 8. *I have ſet the Lord always before me, becauſe he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved.*

6. God is *Lord, who has power to ſave and to deſtroy.* James 4. 12. *There is one Law-giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy: Who art thou that judgeſt another?* He has the *power of Life and Death*; Death that is *eternal*, Life that is *everlaſting*: He is the *Lord of Hoſts*; all Creatures are at his command and beck, and are ready

ready either to be the *Executioners of his Wrath*, or to *ſerve him in his gracious purpoſes* and pleaſure: He is that mighty God who lifts up his hand to Heaven, and ſays, *I live for ever. I kill, and I make alive; I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand*, Deut. 32. 39, 40.

All ſorts of Life are from God, that of *Nature*, *Grace and Glory*: He can raiſe thoſe that attend upon him from the *brink of the Grave*, and reſcue them out of the very jaws of Death, *Pſal.* 30. 2, 3. *O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou haſt healed me. O Lord thou haſt brought up my Soul from the Grave, thou haſt kept me alive that I ſhould not go down into the Pit.* 2 Cor. 1. 9, 10. *We had the Sentence of Death in our ſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in our ſelves, but in God who raiſeth the Dead; who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we truſt, that he will yet deliver us.* God is he who *quickens* and makes *thoſe Spiritually alive*, that were *dead in ſins and treſpaſſes*. He reverſes the Sentence of Death which the Law had paſſed upon them; gives them a new Life and Nature, and inables them to walk in newneſs of Life. 'Tis a mighty Voice, attended with his powerful Spirit which raiſes the Dead in ſin, and makes them live to God, *John* 5.25. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the Dead ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live.* And when this Spiritual Life is wrought, 'tis *really eternal Life* in the *Seed* and *Bloſſom*; and *into eternal Life* at

length it shall be *ripened and perfected.* The *sanctifying Grace* of the *Spirit* is likened unto *water*, because 'tis of a *cleansing*, *refreshing*, and *fructifying* nature; and this Grace shall still be *acting* and *increasing*, till it issue in *glory*, John 4. 14. *But the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a Well of water springing up into everlasting Life.*

And as all sorts of Life are from God, so all *sorts of Death* he has *power* to *inflict:* All Afflictions and Plagues, when this Lord sends them, do say, *Here we are:* The King of Terrors, Death, is *God's subject*, and says, *I am ready to strike*, young or old, high or low, few or many, as the *Lord of all*, does give me *Commission and Command.* And the *second Death* at God's righteous pleasure *opens its everlasting doors*, to receive and eternally to swallow up all that *he sentences* thither, *Isa.* 5. 14. *Therefore Hell hath enlarged her self, and opened her mouth without measure, and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoyceth shall descend into it.* Such a *Lord*, the *effects* of whose *love* and *anger* are *felt not only* in *this* World, but also in the *other*, and indeed run parallel with Eternity, should certainly be attended on with a *great dread of offending* him, with the *exactest care* in every thing to please him.

7. God is a Lord, *obeyed by the whole Creation*, but only *Men on earth, and Devils and damned Spirits in Hell.* These greater lights, the Sun and Moon, that rule the day and night, are perfectly ruled by their Maker, and rise

and

and set at his command: And to shew that he can *stop* the Sun in its *swift motion*, at *Joshua's* intreaty, he *commanded it to stand still in* Gibeon, *and the Moon in the Valley of* Ajalon, Josh. 10. 12. Nay, in the days of *Hezekiah*, he makes the Sun to *move backward*, and to *return no less than ten degrees by which it had gone down*, Isa. 38. 8. All the Stars of Heaven he calls *by their names*, and they observe their courses according to his Ordinances. The Sea does ebb and flow according to his appointment, and keep within the bounds that he has set it when it roars and is most tempestuous: The Storms and Winds fulfil his word, and if he do but say to them, *Peace be still*, presently there is *a great calm*. He calls for the Thunder and the Lightning, and how terrible is the Voice of the one, and the flashing of the other! The Thunder is silenced, and the Lightning extinguished at his pleasure. All Creatures that glide through the Air, or slide through the Ocean, that feed and grow upon the Earth, in their way and manner obey their Maker and Preserver's Will. *Fye*, Oh *Fye* upon *Apostate Angels* and *Men*, that they should be the *only Rebels!* Look upward, downward, on the right hand and on the left, and the many Thousands of Creatures which your Eyes behold, are *so many instances* of *Obedience to God*. Why, Oh why should not all we be ready to yield our utmost Service?

8. God is a Lord *who over-rules them that rebel against him*, though they *break his Commands*; they cannot *get from under his power*, but he can check, restrain, disappoint, and de-

stroy

ſtroy them at his pleaſure. The *Seed of the Woman* has been hated by the *Serpents brood*, and they that have *been born* only *after the Fleſh*, have been ſtrongly inclined to *perſecute* ſuch as have been *born after the Spirit*, Gal. 4. 28, 29. *Now we, Brethren, as* Iſaac *was, are the Children of Promiſe. But as then he that was born after the Fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit: even ſo it is now:* And *ſo* 'tis *likely* to be *ſtill*. When Heathen *Emperors* and *Kings* were *Converts to the Chriſtian Faith*, the *Prince of Darkneſs* did not *turn* and change. He always was, and is, and will be full of Malice againſt *Chriſt the Head*, and againſt his *true Members*. And thoſe who *are of their Father the Devil*, the *Luſts of their Father they will do*; and they that are Saints muſt expect find their *Hearts ſet* againſt them, and as far as they can, their *hands* too.

But that Lord who is with his People, is greater infinitely than the evil one, 1 *John* 4. 4. *Ye are of God, little Children, and have overcome them, becauſe greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the World.* As *Satan's Subtlety* is nothing to *God's Wiſdom*; as his *Power* is ſmall to God's *Almightineſs*, ſo his *Wrath*, though never ſo great, is *a little* and *contemptible thing*, when the *Love* which God bears to his People is *believingly conſidered*. The mighti-eſt Men whom Satan employs to run down the Church of the living God, ſhall never affect their wicked purpoſe; the Church *triumphs* over her moſt *furious Enemies*, look-ing unto her *Mighty Helper*, Pſal. 46. 5, 6, 7.

God

*God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved: God ſhall help her, and that right early. The Heathen raged, the Kingdoms were moved.* They ſtirred up themſelves with their united force, and in their rage they would have devoured the *Iſrael* of God; but *He uttered his Voice, and the Earth melted:* All theſe Enemies were diſpirited and came to nothing, and no wonder, for it follows, *The Lord of Hoſts is with us; the God of* Jacob *is our refuge.* Selah. Well may the *voluntary Subjects* of ſuch a Lord attend upon him with *forwardneſs* and *Faith*, ſince he has ſuch an *abſolute uncontrolable Dominion* over *all his* and *their* Enemies!

9. God is a Lord *infinitely above and better than any other Lords whatſoever.* As he is infinitely ſuperior to all in Majeſty and Greatneſs, ſo alſo in Mercy and Goodneſs: The whole Earth is full of Divine Goodneſs, *Pſal.* 145. 9. *The Lord is good to all and his tender Mercies are over all his works:* It is ſpecial and peculiar Kindneſs which is ſhewn to his Saints, *Pſal.* 103. 11. *As the Heaven is high above the Earth, ſo great is his Mercy towards them that fear him.* What are *other Lords* if compared with *God?* As for *Mammon*, who has moſt of Mankind to be his Vaſſals, his delights are low, his Riches uncertain, his *all* is Vanity. *Satan* is a *cruel Lord*, he is a *Lyar* who *deceives*, a *Murtherer* who *deſtroys* all whom he can keep under his Power and Dominion. And the *Wages* which *Sin* does give to them that ſerve it, is *eternal Death*; and the *more diligent* they have been in the Service of Sin, and

and the *more laborious Workers of Iniquity*, Hell will be ſo much the *hotter*, their Sorrow and Miſery ſo much the greater.

Are ſuch Lords as theſe, comparable to the Lord *Jehovah*, whoſe Strength, whoſe Love is everlaſting? What care does he take of all that are truly his Servants! How mild and gentle is his Government! His *Kingdom* is *Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy.* It was a Pious Ejaculation of one of the Ancients, *Da Domine quod jubes, O Lord give that which thou commandeſt.* His Servants are *by himſelf created in Chriſt Jeſus unto the good works* in which he has commanded them to walk. He teaches them by his own Spirit to do his Will, *Pſal.* 143. 10. *Teach me to do thy Will, for thou art my God, thy Spirit is good, lead me into the Land of Uprightneſs.* He *works in them to Will*, inclining their *Hearts unto his Teſtimonies*; and *he works in them to do of his own good pleaſure*, Phil. 2. 13. And *directs their ways to keep his Statutes* All the good, that good Men do, God is the doer of: his *Preventing* and *Aſſiſting Grace, is*, and *does all in all* And after all *Dona ſua coronat*, he crowns that Grace which *himſelf* has *wrought*, and made *active* with an *eternal weight of Glory.* Well may his attendants Glory in ſuch a Lord as peerleſs! Pſal. 34. 2, 3. *My ſoul ſhall make her boaſt in the Lord: the humble ſhall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnifie the Lord with me: and let us exalt his name together.*

10. God is the *Lord and Judge of all*, at whoſe *Barr Angels and Men*, the *Quick* and the

the *dead* muſt at laſt ſtand. Apoſtate Angels believe and tremble at the foreſight of future Judgment. Satan's time is ſhort, his Wrath great; but his Dread is greater of that great day of reckoning and retribution. And as for the Children of Men, all muſt be judged; the Day is appointed, and is haſtning: Every *one of us*, ſays the Apoſtle, *muſt give account of himſelf to God*, Rom. 14. 12. And an account will be taken of *all that has been done* while we *were in the Body*, Eccleſ. 12. 14 *For God will bring every work into Judgment, with every ſecret thing; whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* How ſhould this Lord and Judge be feared! With what diligence ſhould his *Commandments be kept!* Since this is כָּל־הָאָדָם the *whole of Man.* Man's Duty, Safety, grand Concern and Intereſt lies here. He that will Judge all at laſt, with his own Eyes obſerves and ſees all at preſent, *Pſal.* 11. 4. *The Lord's Throne is in Heaven, his Eyes behold, his Eye-lids try the Children of Men*, Job 31. 4. *Doth not he ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps?* And when all the Children of Men, that ever were or ſhall be do appear before him, his faithful Attendants he will own and put great Honour upon; and will ſay, *Well done good and faithful Servants; you have been faithful in a few things, I will make you Rulers over many things, enter you into the Joy of your Lord:* But how ſhall the Children of Diſobedience ſtand before him! who lived and died in their Rebellion and Wickedneſs, and did nothing but *treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous Judgment of God!*

In

In the ſecond place I am to manifeſt what *influence and effect* the *apprehenſion of God's being the Lord*, ſhould have upon us when we attend upon him.

1. When we look upon God as Lord, we ſhould be ſenſible of our *diſtance*, and how we are *infinitely below him*. What a ſenſe was there of the Divine Majeſty, and of his own meanneſs, in the Patriarch *Abraham* when he ſpoke thoſe words, Gen. 18 27. *Behold now I have taken upon me to ſpeak unto the Lord, who am but Duſt and Aſhes.* We read that *Dominion and Fear are with him*, that the brighteſt *Stars are not pure in his ſight*; *how much leſs Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm?* Job 25.2,5,6. The Grace of the Goſpel does not exclude an holy Awe and Reverence of God, but include it. And the more there is of *grace*, the more there is alſo of this *godly fear*, and the Service is the more acceptable, Heb. 12. 28,29. *Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have Grace whereby we may ſerve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a conſuming Fire.* We are indeed encouraged to come with boldneſs; but that boldneſs is upon the account of our great High Prieſt and Mediator; but though we are the Members of Chriſt, we muſt remember, that God is unconceivably above us. The Man Chriſt Jeſus himſelf when he prayed, *fell on his face* before his heavenly Father, Mat. 26. 39. Nay, he calls *himſelf a worm* too, Pſal. 22. 6. *But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the People.*

2. When

2. When we look upon God as Lord, we *ſhould be deeply humbled and abaſed for our Affronts Offences, and Rebellions againſt him.* 'Tis the Law of the Lord Almighty which ſin breaks; and 'tis the Lord himſelf that ſin cauſes to be deſpiſed. When *David* was truly penitent and contrite, he cries out, *Againſt thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight*, Pſal. 51.4. His ſin had been an injury, and indeed a deadly one to *Uriah* his Subject; but it was a groſs and foul breach of the Law of God, and ſo was committed againſt him. And as his ſin was ever before him, ſo was that Lord againſt whom he had ſinned. This lays him very low, and makes him readily condemn himſelf, and ready to juſtifie God, how ſevere a Sentence ſoever ſhould be paſt; how ſore a puniſhment ſoever ſhould be inflicted upon him; *that thou mighteſt*, ſays he, *be juſtified when thou ſpeakeſt, and be clear when thou judgeſt. Job* had not been ſo careful of God's Honour, as he had been to vindicate his own innocency; at length the Lord himſelf does manifeſt his Glory to him: he confounds him with that queſtion, Job 40.8. *Wilt thou diſannul my Judgment? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayeſt be Righteous? Job* at length has a clearer view of the Greatneſs and Soveraignty of that God with whom he had to do; and ſays, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eye ſeeth thee, wherefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes*, Job 42.5,6.

3. When we look upon God as Lord, we ſhould *admire his concernedneſs for the Salvation and*

*and Happineſs of ſuch as we are.* It was the expreſſion of one who was an eminent Saint, and a great King, *O my Soul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord thou art my Lord, my goodneſs extendeth not to thee*, Pſal 16.2. He is a Lord ſo high, ſo glorious in himſelf, ſo far exalted above all, that the goodneſs of the beſt cannot in the leaſt degree be beneficial to him. He ſtands not then in need of Man, therefore his good will which he bears towards Men is the more to be admired. If the whole humane Race after the firſt defection from God, had periſhed, and every one of them had been miſerable for ever; the bleſſedneſs of God would have been no more impaired, than it was by the loſs and miſery of thoſe Spirits that firſt ſinned, and left their own Habitation; none of which ever was recovered, or ſhall be. Oh, whence is it that the Lord of Glory ſhould ſhew ſuch diſcriminating Grace to the Sons of Men! Lord! *what is Man*, that thou who art ſo much above him, ſhould be ſo mindful of him, as to *viſit him with thy Salvation*, who was unable to ſave himſelf, unworthy to be ſaved; nay, unwilling to be ſaved, till thou didſt make him *willing in the day of thy Power!*

4. When we look upon God as Lord, we ſhould *exceedingly dread his Wrath, and value his Loving-kindneſs.* The Rebukes of ſuch a mighty Lord, when provoked, muſt needs be terrible, Pſal. 18. 7. *Then the Earth ſhook and trembled, the foundations alſo of the Hills moved and were ſhaken, becauſe he was wrath.* Exod 15. 6,7. *Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in*

*in Power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the Enemy, and in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee, thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as Stubble.* And as the Anger of God has *all evils* in its power to inflict on those who are so fool-hardy to provoke it, so his loving-kindness is *ready to open the treasures of his goodness.* How bountiful is his love to his beloved ones! The Psalmist having meditated on it, justly stands amazed at it, and cries out, *How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God!* Psal. 36.7. It transcends all created love: if all the love that is in Men and Angels were united together, it would not be so much, compared with the love of God; as the light of a Gloworm is to the Sun, shining forth in its Noon-day Glory. And as the love of God is so excellent in it self, transcendently excellent also are the acts and beneficial effects of it.

If the *wrath of a King be as the messengers of death*, Prov. 16. 14. what is the wrath of the *King of Kings and Lord of Lords!* If *in the light of the King's Countenance is life, and his favour is as the Cloud of the later Rain*, Prov. 16.15. the favour of the *blessed and only Potentate* must needs be infinitely more refreshing, and *better than life* it self. It is from this Lord that every Man's Judgment comes. He *ministers Judgment at present*; good and evil is dispenced by his hand; and 'tis he that will pass upon all the final Sentence of Absolution or Condemnation at the last day. What care then should there be to have his Wrath appeased by

a Mediator! what fervency of Spirit in sueing for peace and reconciliation! *Solomon* tells, that *many seek the Rulers Favour*; but certainly Divine Favour is much more desirable, because *every man's Judgment is from the Lord*, Prov. 29. 26.

5. When we look upon God as Lord, we *should trust in him for deliverance from other Lords who have had the Dominion over us.* He can work whatsoever, and in whomsoever he pleases, and none shall be able to hinder. The Psalmist was sensible of sins force and power; he was weary of sins Dominion; he cries unto God to deliver him from the Reign of all the sins he knew: and those sins which were secret and concealed from his view, he begs that he might be convinced of them, and throughly cleansed from them, *Psal.* 19. 12, 13. The Lord can turn the Heart perfectly to hate the sin that was most of all beloved; and the strength of sin is gone when once 'tis hated; and as the hatred grows stronger and stronger, sin becomes weaker and weaker daily. *Saul* was a proud self-confident *Pharisee*, a furious Persecutor; the Lord meets him, and stops him in his persecuting Rage; he humbles him, works in his Heart Faith in Christ, against whom he had such a mighty and seemingly invincible prejudice; of a Wolf he turns him into one of the Sheep of Christ; nay, into a zealous and careful Shepherd of the Flock; so that he *preached that Faith which once he endeavoured to destroy*, Gal 3. 23.

The Lord can subdue Iniquity where it has born the greatest sway. If he speaks the word

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of power, down go all *ſtrong-holds*; reaſonings that before were thought ſtrong, are ſeen to be abſurd, imaginations vain, high things and thoughts are *brought into Captivity and Obedience*, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of ſtrong holds, caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every thought to the Obedience of Chriſt.*

The very Prince of the Devils, *Beelzebub* himſelf, the Lord can eaſily diſpoſſeſs. He caſt him out of Heaven, and ſurely he can caſt him out of the Heart alſo. If the Lord ſpeak the Word, Satan falls like Lightning: How ſudden and remarkable is his Downfall! If he charge this unclean Spirit to come out, he muſt preſently quit his Habitation; and if he command him to *keep out*, he *muſt enter no more*, Mark 9. 25. *He rebuked the foul Spirit, ſaying unto him; I charge thee to come out of him, and to enter no more into him.*

When the Lord by the preaching of the Goſpel, made himſelf known in the World, how were Heathen Idols deſtroyed? 1 *Theſ.* 1. 9. *Te turned to God from Idols, to ſerve the living and true God.* And whatever Worldly Enjoyments have been idolzied, he can ſhew the Vanity of them, and mortifie inordinate Affection to them. He is jealous of his Honour, likes not to have his Throne uſurped; we are to truſt in this Lord, and to deſire he would take unto this his great Power, and Reign in us; and

that no oppoſite Lords may be any longer ſerved.

6. When we look upon God as Lord, *we ſhould be careful to know his Will, and always forward to do it.* That is one of the firſt Inquiries of a true *Convert.* Lord, *what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts 9. 6. Man's Will, till renewed by Grace, is fooliſh, perverſe, wicked, and perniciouſly inclined. He wills that which is to his own Woe. 'Tis but reaſon that ſuch a Will ſhould yield to the Will of God who is wiſe, holy, and good Who ever acted according to the Will of God, and ſaw cauſe to repent of it? And ſure I am, that they who do contrary to the Will of God, muſt repent of it in this World, or too late in the next. We find that Wiſdom is very much placed in knowing the Will of God: *Eph.* 5. 17. *Wherefore be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the Will of the Lord is:* And *Happineſs* is placed in the *doing* of it. *Joh.* 13. 17. *If ye know theſe things happy are ye if ye do them.* We ſhould approve our ſelves better Servants, if we did but mind more our Lord and Maſter's Will. In Temptation we ſhould conſider what is the Will of God, and then the Tempter would be withſtood: When earthly Treaſure is laid before us, to draw our Hearts to covet it; we ſhould remember, 'tis the Will of the Lord, that our *Heart and Treaſure ſhould be in Heaven.* Whatever Duty we are ſetting about, towards God or Man; we ſhould inquire how would God have this Duty to be done? What acceptable Service then would God have from us!

us! And what Bleſſings ſhould we be to thoſe, whom we are related to, and converſe with! *Lord, ſhew me thy Will; and let my Will, in all things, and at all times, be determined by thine!* This is becoming Language, and every Soul ſhould ſincerely ſpeak it. He is the moſt eminent and perfect Chriſtian, who ſtands moſt perfect and compleat in all the Will of God.

7. When we look upon God as Lord, *we ſhould never quarrel or murmur at any thing he is pleaſed to do to us or with us.* Arbitrary Power is very much affected by the Potentates of this World; though it would be much more truly great in them, to do as they ought, than to do as they pleaſe. Arbitrary Power is juſtly challenged by the Lord the univerſal Sovereign: He may do whatever he pleaſes; and it will pleaſe him to do nothing but what becomes his own Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and other glorious Excellencies. A mighty Monarch who had walked in Pride, at length was ſo abaſed, that he acknowledged and honoured this higheſt Lord of all; and he ſays, *All the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his Will in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth,* Dan 4. 35. The Diſpenſations of Divine Providence muſt not fall under our Cenſure. He that reproveth God will ill anſwer for it. 'Tis ſinful Boldneſs to ſtrive with him, and ſay, *What doſt thou?* As if he had not done ſo well as he might: 'Tis more becoming, with obedient Patience and Submiſſion, to cry out: *Oh the Depth of the*

*Riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out!* Rom. 11. 33. and Pſal. 145. 17. *The Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works.* When under his ſeverer Dealings with us, we charge him with *Rigour* and *want of Care*; we do but *charge God foolishly.* His *Underſtanding is infinite*, Pſal. 147. 5. therefore he is not liable to the leaſt Miſtake: His Bowels are tender, and he can never become Cruel. 'Tis inconſiſtent with his Juſtice, *to lay upon any Man more than is right, that he ſhould enter into Judgment with God*, Job 34. 23. He is ſo gracious that he afflicts when his People need, and 'tis good for them to be afflicted. That Man ſpake very ill who ſaid *I do well to be angry.* Whatever the Lord does to his People, he does wiſely, juſtly, faithfully; how then can their Fretting and Impatience be juſtified! It would be far better for them to ceaſe their Contention and Diſputing, and to anſwer as *Job* at laſt did, *Job* 40 4, 5. *Behold, I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay my Hand upon my Mouth; once have I ſpoken, but I will not anwer, yea twice, but I will proceed no farther.*

8. When we look upon God as Lord, we ſhould *long to behold his Glory in his Kingdom.* It was the Deſire of *Moſes*, Exod. 33. 18. *I beſeech thee ſhew me thy Glory.* It is but little that the Saints ſee of the King of Saints, in compariſon of what they ſhall ſee. They know but in part, and how ſhould they long *that that which is perfect may come, and that which*

*which is in part may be done away*, 1 Cor. 13. 10. The Earth is the Lord's Footſtool, and here we behold but ſome Footſteps and Shaddows, and have a darker Diſcovery of him; but the Heaven is his Throne, and when we come to ſtand before his Throne; how bright will be his Majeſty in our Eyes! How glorious his Holineſs! How will his Face be all Light and Love! And how raviſhing will the fulleſt Senſe of that Love be! It ſhould be our Care by a continual Increaſe of Purity in Heart, to be fitted for this beatifical Viſion of the Lord of Glory. *Mat.* 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God.* And this Viſion ſhould the more longed for, becauſe it will be transforming. When we behold the Lord's Glory, we ſhall partake of it; when we ſee him, we ſhall, to our eternal Excellency and Satisfaction, be like him. 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

In the laſt place follows the Application.

USE I. ſhall be of Reproof. Well may the Mouth of his Meſſengers be full of Reproof, ſince the Lord that ſends them is ſo generally diſregarded. Several ſorts of Perſons are worthy Reprehenſion.

1. They are to be reproved, who ſay with *Pharaoh, who is the Lord that we ſhould obey his Voice?* How many are there who will not acknowledge they owe him any Service; or if they do acknowledge it; they are ſo wicked and unrighteous, that they will not render

what they cannot but confeſs is due to him! How many ſay, *Our Lips are our own, who is Lord over us?* Pſal. 12. 4. who is he that would give laws to our Tongues, and put them under a Bridle? They ſay alſo, *our Members* are *all* our own, and therefore we will employ them as we pleaſe; though that employing is abuſing and abaſing of them, to be Inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs unto Sin. Our Time alſo is our own, and therefore we will paſs it according to our own Pleaſure, as if Time were a thing of no Value, and to have it well or ill with them to Eternity, were a matter of meer Indifferency. They that now cry, *Who is the Lord?* When they ſtand, as they all muſt, before his Judgment Seat, he will make them know who he is. How terrifying will his Looks be! How heavy will his Hand be felt! They would not obey the Scepter of his Word; and he will *break them with his Iron Rod, and daſh them in pieces like a Potter's Veſſel*, Pſal. 2. 9.

2. They are to be reproved who have a *greater Reverence for Man than for God, who is the ſovereign Lord of all.* They dare not diſpleaſe great Men; but the great God they make bold to offend. Men whom they depend upon, they are careful to keep in with; but that God, in *whoſe Hand their Breath is, and whoſe are all their Ways they do not glorifie*, Dan. 5. 23. They depend upon this Lord for their Being and Bleſſedneſs, and all things. Their Life is continued only during his Pleaſure; all things that they have are of his beſtowing; and if ever they are bleſſed, 'tis God muſt

make

make them ſo; and yet the Favour and Anger of this God, are contemned in Compariſon of the Love and Hatred of Man. How many will comply with the Luſts of Men that will not conform to the Will of God? Mens Inventions are regarded more than God's Inſtitutions. Thus the *Statutes of* Omri *were kept, and all the Works of the Houſe of* Ahab, and *Iſrael* did *walk in their Counſels*, Mic. 6. 16. when they rejected the Counſel of God againſt themſelves, and caſt the Laws of *Jehovah* behind their Backs. But how poor a thing is Man's Help againſt Divine Anger! Nay, here the mightieſt Man can be no Security. *Job* 9. 13. *If God will not withdraw his Anger, the proud Helpers do ſtoop under him:* And thoſe whom the Lord does undertake to comfort, why ſhould Man that ſhall dye diſmay them. *Iſa.* 51. 12,13. *I, even I am he that comforteth you. Who art thou that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a Man that ſhall dye, and of the Son of Man which ſhall be as Graſs? And forgeteſt the Lord thy Maker, that ſtretched forth the Heavens, and laid the Foundations of the Earth?* His Power may well make the Fury of Oppreſſors contemptible: But God's Power is irreſiſtable, as his Wrath is intolerable.

3. They are to be reproved who prefer the *worſt Lords before the greateſt and the beſt of all.* The true God is certainly the beſt Lord; and Sin and Satan are the worſt that can be ſerved; and yet how few has the former, how many Servants have the later! The Lord's Government is moſt gracious; the Paths he requires

quires us to walk in are *Pleaſantneſs and Peace*, Prov. 3. 17. But the Ways of Sin are quite contrary. *No Peace ſaith my God to the wicked*, Iſa. 57. 21. Whatever Sin in the beginning may ſeem, its End is bitter as Wormwood, ſharp as a two-edged Sword; and they that ſerve it, their Feet go down to Death, and their Steps will quickly take hold of Hell. Shall I ſhew you the manner of Sin and Satan's Reign? Their Vaſſals are put upon Cruel Hard Service, and they muſt ſtick at nothing. If the fulfilling of their Luſts call for it, the Eſtate muſt be waſted, Health muſt be endangered, Repute and good Name muſt be diſregarded, Poſterity muſt be beggared, Life it ſelf muſt be ſhortened, and the precious Soul loſt for ever, rather than ſin not be gratified and ſerved. Sin has a Law, and what Command does it impoſe upon thoſe that are ſubject to it? Its Injunctions are ſuch as theſe; *Fight againſt God, and ſlight the Wrath of the Lord Almighty.* Mind *neither thy Duty, nor thy Safety.* Purſue *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit, but care not for the trueſt and eternal Bleſſedneſs.* Be ſure *to pleaſe thy Fleſh, and ſeek thy ſelf and mind thy Carnal Intereſt, though thou art in the worſt Senſe undone thereby.* Go on *impenitently and ſecurely in thy Wickedneſs, till thou fall into Hell Flames.* Do *all this and dye, and damn thy ſelf unto Eternity.* What hard ſayings are theſe! Yet Thouſands and Millions hear and obey them! It is amazing that thoſe who have reaſonable Souls, ſhould act ſo void of all ſound Reaſon, as to refuſe his Service,

Service, who commands them to be wise, and safe, and good, and should chuse to be Fools, and to be miserable!

4. They are to be reproved, who have *begun to serve the Lord; and afterwards forsake his Service, and revolt from him.* These revolters shew a great Zeal and Forwardness in Religion, many of them, for a time; they seem to have escaped the pollutions of the World, and to have got the Victory over it, and to have overcome the evil One: but being again entangled and overcome themselves by Mammon and Satan, they are a credit to these Masters, and to their false and pernicious ways; but they are a great dishonour to Religion, and to the Author of it the Lord of Glory. These revolters discover an *evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God*, which is so much caution'd against, *Heb.* 3. 12. and if without Faith 'tis *impossible to please God*, how much must he needs be provoked by infidelity! and with what Torments will their unbelief at last be confuted and punished together! These Revolters quench a great deal of Light which has shined into them, this aggravates the works of darkness unto which they return; though they have under Conviction felt the Terrors of the Lord, yet they venture more than ever to incense him; in a special manner they grieve the Spirit of God, and deeply wound their own Spirits: But these Wounds are not felt at present; their Consciences are seared, Satan has fuller and faster possession of them; fulness of sin quickly follows; and the *last state with*

*with them is worse than the first*, Mat. 12. 45.

USE II. Shall be of Advice in these particulars.

1. Hearken to the Lord inviting and calling you all to his Service. There is room in his House for many Thousands more than are there; and there is plentiful and abundant provision for their entertainment. *In my Father's House*, says the Prodigal when he came to himself, *there is Bread enough and to spare*, Luke 15. 17. Christ's Sacrifice of himself can put away multitudes of sins more than as yet have been pardon'd. And though Millions of empty and lost Souls more come to him, out of his fulness they may be all replenished, and secure under the shadow of his wings. His Messengers say to you *Come*, himself says *Come*, his Spirit says *Come*; your Wants which none but he can supply, speak aloud to you to *go to him*; keep therefore no longer at a distance. He is most ready to receive you graciously, and to communicate grace of all sorts to you.

2. Behold how *willing this Lord is to pass by all past disobedience upon your believing and repentance.* The Apostle *Paul* was not upbraided with his persecuting Rage and Hellish Fury, when once he submitted himself to the Lord, and laid down his Weapons wherewith he had fought against God. *The Grace of our Lord*, says he, *was exceeding abundant, with Faith and Love that is in Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. 1. 14. and v. 15, 16. he tells us, that he the chief of sinners obtained Mercy, that the greatest sinners hereafter

after may hope and expect Mercy upon their believing and Converſion. *Howbeit for this Cauſe I obtained Mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering for a Pattern to them who ſhould hereafter believe on him to Life Everlaſting.* Whatever your Rebellions have been; if *now you be willing and obedient.* All ſhall be forgotten and forgiven. *Scarlet and Crimſon Sins*, ſhall become *white as Snow and Wool*, Iſa. 1. 18, 19.

3. See where *your Righteouſneſs and Strength lies.* Jeſus Chriſt the righteous is the Righteouſneſs of them that do believe. His Obedience and Sufferings can ſatisfie for and cover all your Diſobedience, and 'tis through him alone that you attain the free Gift of Juſtification of Life. He *became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs*, Pſal. 2. 8. and 'tis by the Obedience of this one, the ſecond *Adam*, that all, as many can believe in him are *made righteous*, *Rom.* 5. 19. And as in the Lord you, have Righteouſneſs, ſo in him you have Strength too. His Power muſt reſt upon you. elſe no good will be done by you: Through his Strength all things may be done, but he himſelf ſays, *without me ye can do nothing*, Joh. 15. 5. Never think by good Works to ſatisfie for bad ones: The beſt Works have much amiſs in them: And by no means entertain an Imagination, that at your own Pleaſure you can work in your ſelves to will and to do; but always acknowledge, the neceſſity and Efficacy of the Grace of Chriſt, and glorifie that Grace, ſaying, when you obey and labour,

it

*it is not I, but the Grace of God that is with me.*

4 Earneſtly deſire that your Hearts may be circumciſed to love both the Lord himſelf, and his Service likewiſe. It is a Promiſe worth more, and if made good to us, will enrich us more, than the Wealth of both the *Indies*: Deut. 30. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumciſe thy Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed to love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayſt live.* An Heart to love him is his own Gift, and the Heart muſt be circumciſed by himſelf, before it will be brought to love him. The Prophet ſpeaks of the Foreskin of the Heart; that muſt be taken away. Now this Foreskin of the Heart is Carnal and Worldly Love, together with Enmity againſt God and his Law. Cry to the Lord according to his good Word of Promiſe to mortifie the one, and to ſubdue the other: And that he would give you a new Heart and Nature, cauſe a new Light to ſhine that may manifeſt his glorious Goodneſs in the Face of Chriſt, and ſo direct your Hearts into the Love of himſelf. If he be truly loved, he will be the more willingly obeyed; and truly his Precepts are worthy to be loved too; the better they are kept, the more truly excellent are thoſe that keep them. And themſelves are kept in more perfect Peace. The Pſalmiſt ſays, *My Soul hath kept thy Teſtimonies, and I love them exceedingly.* Pſal. 119. 167. and no wonder, for he had ſaid before, *v.* 165. *Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* Such a

Lord,

Lord, such a Law deserves Love, and Love will sweeten Service, it will not count this Service tedious, but mightily incline the Heart to Perseverance in its Duty.

5. Let your Fear and Awe of the Lord's Majesty, when you attend upon him, be joyn'd with an Hope in his Mercy. If Fear and Hope are thus joyned together, as you will be the more encouraged in God, so God will take the more Pleasure in you: For the *Lord takes Pleasure in them that fear him, and in those that hope in his Mercy*, Psal. 147. 11. The Mercy of God is magnified in his Word, on purpose that Hope may be raised, and rise still higher and higher. This Lord on whom you ought to attend, is rich in Mercy; His *merciful Kindness is great*, Psal. 117. 2. He has Mercy, not upon the account of Merit in Man, but *because he will have Mercy*, Rom. 9. 18. And how often is it said, *Psal* 136. that *his Mercy endures for ever!* Here is a large and firm Foundation for Hope to build on. And if your Hope be not presumptuous, but of a purifying Nature; you may from such a merciful Lord, confidently expect that Grace, and those good things you need in time: And when your short time is at an end, the best things of all unto eternity.

I have done with the second Doctrine.

Doct. III. I come now to the third and last Doctrine, which I principally design to insist on, That *Attendance upon the Lord should be without Distraction.* 'Tis not only Apostacy from the Faith, and the Practice of Religion, which the

the Apostle bids us to take heed of, which is a more gross departing away from God; but he cautions against any Withdrawings of Heart from that Lord with whom we have to do. Therefore in a time of Distress and Persecution, he prefers a single State before Wedlock; not that Marriage in it self considered, has any thing of Sin in it, for 'tis honourable in all; not that a single State in it self has any thing of Holiness, but because the Cares that attend Marriage, are apt to distract the Mind, and to hinder the things that belong to the Lord, from being cared for as they ought and might be. Indeed in the Context there is a plain Intimation, that 'tis a great part of Christian Prudence, so to order our secular Affairs, and to make choice of such a Condition of Life as may be most subservient to our spiritual Designs, and may least interfere with our main Business, which is the Lord's Service, that that may be done without Distraction. They are pronounced to be the *blessed ones, who keep God's Testimonies, and that seek him with the whole Heart*, Psal. 119. 2. And since the whole Heart must seek him; the Thoughts, the Affections, the all of the Heart must attend upon him, nothing of the Soul must be absent or withdrawn. The Prophet speaks of the *Hearts engaging* to approach unto God, *Jer.* 30. 21. *For who is this that engageth his Heart to approach unto me? Saith the Lord.* That the Heart may be thus engaged for God; it must be disengaged from other things, and all that is within it too, must be engaged to approach to him. When *Moses* and the

the Children of *Israel* were to go into the Wilderness to serve the Lord: They went with *their young and old, with their Flocks and their herds, there was not an Hoof left behind,* Exod. 10. 26. And when we go to serve our God, we should go with our all: No Power of our Souls should be exempted, not so much as a Thought should be left behind.

In the handling of this Doctrine I shall,

First, tell you *what Distraction in attending upon God is;*

Secondly, *What it is to attend upon the Lord without Distraction.*

Thirdly, Assign the *Reasons why, with such Care, we should take heed of Distraction in serving him.*

Answer in the fourth place, *some Cases of Conscience about these Distractions.*

Fifthly, *make Application.*

In the first place, I am to tell you *what Distraction in attending upon God is.* 'Tis the first Step to the Cure, to know our Disease, and to have a right Sense of it. Several things are here to be premised.

1. Distraction is the *Fault of the Heart*: That deceitful and wicked thing; how many Faults has it! And how often does it withdraw when we have to do with God, flying as *Jonah* from his Presence! and being any where but where it should be! Indeed sometimes this Distraction does but too visibly and scandalously

appear by unneceſſary Whiſperings, by Salutations when Perſons are in God's Sanctuary and Service, by the wandring of the Eye, and other irreverent Carriage and Behaviour in the time of Worſhip: Theſe, when ordinarily allowed, are plain Indications, that the Heart is not in God's Work, and which is worſe, cares not to be engaged therein: And how blameworthy then is it! It is the Heart which fooliſhly departs from the Lord. It is not ſo right and ſtedfaſt with him as it ſhould be. *Pſal.* 78. 8. *A Generation that ſet not their Heart aright, and whoſe Spirit was not ſtedfaſt with God*; has a Brand ſet upon them, that we may take heed of being like them.

2. Diſtraction is a Fault that *is moſt eaſily incurred*; as the Leaves of ſome Trees waver with the leaſt ſtirring of the Wind, ſo the Mind of Man is apt to waver, and diſcover its natural Inſtability, when Corruption ſtirs within, or Satan endeavours to put the Heart into Diſorder. How far may the Heart, if it be not ſtrictly watched, ſtart of a ſudden! as far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt! nay, as far as Earth is from Heaven! 'Tis natural to the Soul to lift up it ſelf to Vanity. This is intimated plainly by the Pſalmiſt, when he deſcribes the acceptable Attendant on God to be one that *hath not lift up his Soul to Vanity*, Pſal. 24. 4. By Vanity we may underſtand Idols which are called by that Name; or the Vanities of this World, which the Heart is ſo prone to gad, and rove after, even when Duties of the greateſt Importance are performing, and which

which ought to be performed with the greatest Fixedness of Thought, and Seriousness imaginable.

3. The *longer the Distraction is, it is the worse.* A Heart which is truly good and honest, may be seized on by Distraction before it is aware. The evil one may step into the Chariot and begin to drive it away from God; deceitful Sin may suddenly arise in the Soul, and begin to disturb and defile it: But when this is quickly observed, and the wakeful Conscience checks the Heart, and the upright Heart is glad of the Admonition, and presently checks it self, and immediately returns to its Lord, and to its Work and Duty: Satan misses his Aim, and the Duty shall not be lost. The Soul which follows hardest after God, may sometimes stumble; but if assoon as 'tis down, 'tis up again, and runs the faster: This running will not be in vain.

But when Distraction continues for a great while, it argues the Conscience is not so vigilent and faithful as it should be, in that it does not correct these vagrant Thoughts which come into the Mind. There is a Fault also in the Heart, that it can so patiently endure, such vain Guests to lodge in it for so long a time before they are turned out of doors. The Psalmist says, that *his Spirit made diligent Search,* Psal. 77. 6. A Spirit that does so will quickly take notice of these roving Imaginations; and there is an endeavour to thrust them out assoon as they are found out: But if there is a Carelessness, and too great a Connivance at these

Wandrings; though the Soul may not be *quite dead* in Sin; yet there is much of a *Spiritual Lethargy and Sleepineſs*, which is the Image of ſpiritual Death.

4. If Diſtractions in holy Duties are *ordinarily allowed of, they argue the Heart not right with God.* When the Heart is conſtantly abſent from Ordinances, and does not care to be better inclined and diſpoſed to them; when it willingly is at Mammon's and Satan's Command, even then when the Body draws nigh to God, and there is a Lip-honour and Service given to him; this argues plainly that the Heart is unrenewed, and remains alienated and eſtranged from the Lord. The Heart muſt needs be ſtill carnal and wicked, and Enmity againſt God, that is *like the eyes of Fools in the End of the Earth*, Prov. 17. 24. When *things above ſhould be ſought, and Heaven ſhould be minded.*

Theſe things being premiſed, I ſhall tell you *what Diſtraction in attending upon God is*, in in theſe Particulars.

1. The Heart is diſtracted in this Attendance, when *its Thoughts are impertinent and vain.* Theſe kind of Thoughts may well be called *Legion*, for they are many. They are like the Motes in the Sun, or the Bubbles in the Water, on a rainy Day, innumerable. Theſe Thoughts hover about the Minds of the beſt, when they engage in holy Duties, and will preſently intrude, if they are not kept out with a very ſtrict Guard. But where they are en-

entertained, they draw off the Heart from the Work in hand, and the Lord sees it, and is displeased. *Psal.* 94. 11. *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Man, that they are Vanity; and Impertinency*, is not the smallest part of this Vanity. Vain Man is compared to a *wild Ass's Colt*, Job 11. 12. The Silliness of that Creature, and its Frisks and Motions to little purpose, are a fit Representation of the Mind of Man, and of its foolish Sallies and Vagaries in the Lord's Service. Who has not reason to cry out with the Psalmist; *Psal.* 69. 5. *O God thou knowest my Foolishness, and my Sins are not hid from thee.* If in the Performance of holy Duties the Tongue should fall a talking of some other matter, and idle and vain Discourse should proceed out of the Lips; this would be a *scandalous Distraction* that others might take notice of: Now *thinking* is the Minds *speaking*, and the Heart-searcher can and does more easily take notice when the Mind thinks impertinently, than we can observe when the Tongue speaks so.

2. The Heart is distracted, *when in religious Duties its Thoughts are wicked and vile.* Our Lord who *well knew what is in Man*, tells us, *Mat.* 15. 19. *Out of the Heart of Man proceed evil Thoughts.* These are the *first-bad Offspring*, and the greatest Wickedness that is acted, *begins* with them: How *great* was *Man's Wickedness upon Earth!* When *God saw that every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually*, Gen. 6. 5. If Thoughts are evil *continually*, they don't cease

to be evil, when Duties of Religion are engaged in. When proud Thoughts, or wanton filthy Thoughts, or worldly Thoughts, or envious, malicious, and revengeful Thoughts, or any other wicked Imaginations have place in the Heart: These, as Swarms of noisome Flies, *corrupt Mens Services*, and make their Sacrifices unto God to become abominable. By these the Mind does not only *wander* from God, but is *alienated* and *estranged* from him. The Heart is in *Hell*, while the Eyes are looking up to *Heaven*, and the Tongue is speaking to the God that dwells there. When a Man with an Heart full of such sinful Thoughts approaches unto God; how loathsome must he needs be unto his pure and piercing Eye! The Lord beholds and knows *him afar off*, Psal. 138. 6. And indeed, what Fellowship can there be between Holiness and Pollution? Its much more unbecoming and dangerous for such an one to approach the Presence of God, than it would be for the foulest Leper, with the nastiest Garments, to come before the greatest Emperor upon the Face of the Earth.

3. The Heart is distracted in attending on God. *When hellish Injections are entertained*, Satan sheweth his deep and inveterate Enmity against God, in these blasphemous Injections, and he creates a very troublesome Disturbance to us in the Lord's Service; he has *fiery Darts* whereby he does endeavour to cause Hell Fire in our Consciences, by dispairing Agonies and Horrours: And blasphemous

Thoughts

Thoughts are like fiery Bombs which he ſhoots into our Souls; to put us into Diſorder in our Duties, and utterly out of Frame. Sometimes this wickedly bold and foul and wretched Spirit will give the vileſt Names to the bleſſed God, which are given to the worſt of Men. Sometimes he will ſay that divine Favour and Fury are both contemptible, and as if he were a mere Idol, that 'tis not in him *to do good or to do evil*, Zeph. 1. 12. whereas indeed penal Evils are all from him. *Amo.* 3. 6. *Shall there be evil in the City and the Lord hath not done it?* And the Pſalmiſt tells, *Pſal.* 33. 5. *He loves Righteouſneſs and Judgment, the Earth is full of the Goodneſs of the Lord.*

Sometimes Satan will deny the Providence of God, and ſay, *how doth God know? And is there Knowledge in the moſt high?* As if he did not regard Men or their Ways; but that all things in this World fall out, either according to blind Chance, or fatal Neceſſity; whereas the Pſalmiſt, with great Force and Evidence of Reaſon argues, *Pſal.* 94. 9, 10. *He that planted the Ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the Eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that teacheth Man Knowledge, ſhall not he know?* Nay, ſometimes this evil one, though *himſelf believes a God*, and *trembles* before him, yet will inject *atheiſtical Thoughts*, and confidently deny the *very Being* of a God, that he may diſcourage all Religion and Application to him: Whereas the *Heavens declare the Glory of the Lord*, and as the Light of the *Sun is evident*, ſo it is evident there is a *God*, by *whom* that

*Sun was made*, and all things visible besides.

Finally, this lying Spirit will bear in with great Violence, *blasphemous Falshoods* against the *Word and Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Christ was manifested to *destroy the Works of the Devil*; and the Devil will endeavour to hinder the *Word of Christ* from being believed; though God himself did bear witness to the Truth of this Word, *both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will*, Heb. 2. 4. and *miraculous Operations of Grace* cease not to this Day. When a *blind Mind* is made to *see*, when an *Heart of Stone* is turned into an Heart of *Flesh*; when the *dead in Sin* are made *alive to God*, and *Righteousness* is their Practice, and their *Conversation is in Heaven*; all this shews a *divine Efficacy* in the Word, and its divine Authority, and most certain Truth.

These hellish Injections must by no means have an *undisturbed Abode* in the Mind; for if they have, they will *cut the Sinews* of all *religious Endeavours*: They will *damp the Affections*, *dead the Heart*, and *eat out* all manner of *gracious Inclinations and Purposes*. These blasphemous Injections shew that there is a Devil, for even Nature, as bad as it is, will rise against some vile Thoughts, which he casts in, and he is an *Enemy to God*, to *Righteousness*, to the *Souls of Men*, and as great a Liyar as an Enemy; therefore he is not at all to be credited, but his *Wickedness and Falshoods to be abhorred*.

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4. The Heart is distracted, when *though its Thoughts are good, they are unseasonable.* A good Thought becomes a bad one, when 'tis entertained at a *time that is not proper* for it. If when we are confessing Sin, a Thought, good for the matter of it, arises that is *utterly alien*, that draws the Mind away from thinking of Sin, and that has *no Tendency to humble and break* the Heart for it: This Thought, by its Unseasonableness, becomes evil. If when we are Petitioning for Mercy, a good Thought should intrude, and make us forget what we are doing, and we neither mind *what we are asking*, nor to whom we are speaking. A good Thought in this Case causes a sinful Distraction: *Solomon* says, that every thing is *beautiful in its time*, Eccles. 3. 11. *A Word spoken in due season, how good is it!* And as Words, so Thoughts are the better the more seasonable they are. If the subtle Serpent cannot divert the Mind from the Duty performing, by bad Thoughts, he will endeavour to do it by good ones. If when hearing the Word preached, we fall a reading the Scripture to our selves, or our Minds are upon a *Piece of a Sermon* hat we heard at another time, and the Truths that are propounding, and the Duties that are pressing, are not at all regarded: Alas, we are but too much like the very high way ground, and the Seed is catched away assoon as sown.

5. The Heart is distracted *when the Mind and Judgment are so carnal and perverted, as to esteem earthly things above spiritual and eternal*: When our Lord says, *The Light of the Body is*

*the*

*the Eye*, Mat. 6. 22. He intimates, that what the Eye is to the Body, the Judgment is to the Soul, and indeed to the whole Man: If the Judgment be rectified, and apprehends things aright, the actings of the Soul will be the better; but if the *Judgment be darkened*, and does not discern between Truth and Falshood, between good and evil, between Substance and Shaddows, the Soul must needs *wander away from God*, and lose it self quickly. When the Judgment is perverted, there is a very *wicked Distraction of Mind*, for the Judgment gives Sentence against God, and for the Creature, as if a *Portion in this Life* were *more worthy to* be chosen, and secured than an *Inheritance that is eternal*. It was said to the rich Man in Hell, *Son, remember thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things*, Luke 16. 25 They are called *his good things*, because his mistaking Mind apprehended them to be *the good things indeed*; and the *best things of all*, were not in his Judgment so good as these. How can the natural Man chuse but be distracted in all his Duties he performs to God, since his darkened Mind thinks such Duties unprofitable, and that the *things of God* are *Foolishness*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.*

6. The Heart is distracted, *when the Will and Affections withdraw from God and fasten upon Vanity: A false Judgment being past*, no wonder that a foolish Choice is made. This

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is an ill diſtraction indeed: When the Biaſs of the Will turns away from God, and it refuſes to be ſubject to him, though the beſt Lord, and cares as little to enjoy him as to obey him. The Lord obſerved and complained of this. *Pſal.* 81. 11. *My People would none of me.* He offered no leſs than himſelf to them; who is ſo infinitely deſirable, who was ſo alſufficient and able to fulfil their Deſires, in whom the trueſt Delight was to be found, yet this greateſt and beſt Offer was contemned. And when the Heart and Affections are thus denyed to God, how are they beſtowed? Pleaſures are loved more than God, and even in his Houſe, and when there is an external Service yielded: *the Heart goeth after its Covetouſneſs*, Ezek. 33. 31. There is a Greedineſs after Gain; no hungring and thirſting after Righteouſneſs: Iniquity, though ſo hateful and hurtful, is regarded in the Heart, but there is no regard unto God there. How can there be a *worſe Diſtraction*, than for the Heart to forſake Fullneſs and Goodneſs it ſelf, and to embrace and fix upon meer Emptineſs and Evil! In this Diſtraction there is Phrenzy in the higheſt Degree.

7. The Heart is diſtracted, *when carnal ſelf and intereſt in attending upon God, is the great end deſigned.* The end is that which directs an action; and the eye and heart of him who acts, is upon the end which he purſues. If the end be wrong, the action cannot be right. Without a ſincere aim, no religious Duty can ſincerely be performed. Now if we look no higher than our carnal ſelves, in thoſe Services we

we pretend to do for God, our *selfish design* will be in our Thoughts, and distract them: Acceptance with God, and the Enjoyment of him, will not be at all minded. The Captives in *Babylon* were blamed in their Fasting and Mourning, that God was not in their Eye; his Approbation, his Glory not regarded. Zach. 7. 5. *Did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?* They minded returning to *Canaan*, more than returning to God and to their Duty. If indeed we are truly selfish, God will not be angry with us; for there is an inseparable connexion between God's Honour, and our *truest interest*. When we *seek and eye him most*, we *most truly eye* and *seek our selves*: God has the highest Honour from us, when we look for the *highest Happiness in him*, and love him for himself, and delight in him and bless and magnifie him to eternity. But when God himself is not our end; but his Service is made use of, that we may the better bring about our earthly and worldly designs and projects: Our Duties then are *Hypocrisie and Distraction*. Such were those whom the Prophet so severely taxed. Jer. 12 2. *Thou art near*, O Lord, *in their Mouth, and far from their Reins*. They gave good words, but their Hearts were far off from that God to whom they *spake*: It was outward Prosperity and Plenty which they sought; and this Plenty and Prosperity was most wickedly abused.

8. The Heart is distracted, *when the worship performed is Will-worship of Man's Invention*, not of *God's Institution*. How can there chuse

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but be *Distraction*, if there be a wandring out of the Way in which he has appointed us to serve him? The Jews of old were very culpable in this respect. *Isa.* 29. 13. *Their Fear towards me*, says God, *is taught by the Precepts of Men.* When Man aspired to be *like unto God in Wisdom*, he deprived himself of the *Knowledge of God*, and grew *unacquainted with his Will*, so that he is utterly unfit to be his own Instructer in Religion; there is a necessity of a *Revelation from Heaven*, that *God* may be known, and the *right way* of *serving* him may be understood. The *vilest Impurities*, the *greatest Cruelties* have been practis'd under the *Name of Devotion*, when *Man* has been contriving how God should be served. Nay, *Will-worship is condemned* by the Apostle, though there be never so great a *shew of Wisdom and Humility, and neglecting of the Body*, Col. 2. 23. The *Will of God* is to determine what Worship pleases him, *not the Will of Man*; and whatever Mortifications and Austerities some may fancy, God allows *an honour and satisfaction to the flesh*, as long as the *Lusts of it are not fulfilled*. Worship that is not of God's Institution, is meer distraction, labour to no purpose, unless it be to ill purpose. When God is represented by Images, he is grosly *misrepresented*; the Glory of him who is an *incorruptible Spirit* is *changed*. When other Mediators in Heaven are made use of, besides *that great High-Priest who is passed into Heaven, Jesus the Son of God*, worship becomes carnal, sinful, and the mind of the Worshipper instead of drawing near to God,

God, is distracted and drawn away from him.

In the second place I am to tell you what it *is to attend upon the Lord without distraction.*

1. To attend without distraction, is *to set God just before us, and our selves just before God.* When our Eye is fixt upon his Eye, and we behold him looking most stedfastly upon us. He *searches the Hearts*, and *weighs the Spirits* of the Children of Men. Nothing can escape his finding out, *for he knoweth the Secrets of the Heart*, Psal. 44. 21. *Doth not he see my ways?* says *Job*; not only the ways of the Feet, but the ways and Workings of his very Soul, were open to God's View. *We are all here present before God*, says *Cornelius*, Acts 10. 33. *I have set the Lord always before me*, says *David*, Psal. 16. 8. This is undistracted Attendance, when the Lord is still kept in our view; and we keep and behave our selves as just under the inspection of the all-observing Eye of his Holiness.

2. To attend without distraction, is *to have right apprehensions of God, whom we attend upon.* God is a Spirit, and as such he must be apprehended when we worship him; that we may *worship him in spirit and in truth*, and that our Conceptions of him may be spiritual, and suitable unto his *Nature*. As he is without *Passions*, which Men are subject to, so without those bodily parts which Men have. Indeed metaphorically, Eyes, and Hands, and Feet, and Heart are in Scripture ascribed unto God; but

but by theſe is ſignified, his Knowledge, his Working, his Acceſſes and Departing, his Will and Pleaſure. We muſt take heed of entertaining groſs *Idea's* and Images in our Minds concerning God, Act. 17. 29. *We ought not to think*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that the Godhead is like unto Gold, or Silver, or Stone graven by art or Man's device.* Such kind of *Repreſentations* are very improper of him, who not only *fills the Earth*, but the *Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him.* Our worſhip is diſtraction, and the heart is *drawn away from God unto a meer Vanity* and *Idol*, if God is conceived in the *likeneſs of any Creature.* How ſeverely are the *Gentiles* cenſured, and how dreadfully were they puniſhed, and left to their *vile Luſts and Affections, to diſhonour their own Bodies*; becauſe they *glorified not God as God*, but *changed his Glory* into the Image of *corruptible Creatures!* Rom. 1. 21, 22, 23. *Becauſe that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkned; profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe they became Fools, and changed the Glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds and fourfooted Beaſts, and creeping things.*

In our Attendance upon God, we muſt think of him, as an *incomprehenſible Spirit*, of infinite *Wiſdom, Power, Truth, Holineſs, Mercy and Goodneſs; ready in Chriſt to receive returning Sinners, but full of diſpleaſure againſt thoſe that go on ſtill in their Treſpaſſes.* God muſt be believed to be *One*, yet in the Unity there is a Trinity.

Trinity. *This one God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.* *Nazianzen* an ancient *Greek* Father, thus expresses his apprehensions of God, when he came to worship him. *I am not able,* says he, *to apprehend One, but I am presently struck with the brightness of Three: I am not able to distinguish Three, but I am presently brought back to One again.* Regulate your Apprehensions of God by that Revelation he has made of himself in his own Word; and pry no farther than what is written, that so you may *undistractedly* worship *God himself,* and not the *fruit of your imagination instead of him.*

3. To attend without distraction, implies the *greatest intention of mind.* As all the Lines from the circumference of a Circle, meet together in one point of the Center, so the Thoughts of the Mind should *center upon God,* and the Duty that is done to him. God should be so minded, as that all other things should be out of mind. Though the Soul is united to the Body, yet it should be in a *sense separated,* as *risen with Christ,* and with him *ascended,* and *sitting in heavenly places,* Eph. 2. 6. *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* How intent upon God, and his Praises are the *Spirits of Just Men made perfect!* And the Spirits of Saints Militant should *imitate* those that are Triumphant. It is storied of that famous Mathematician *Archimedes,* that when *Syracuse* was taken by *Marcellus,* he was so intent in making Figures upon the ground, that he minded not the taking of the City, and was slain by a Soldier

dier that knew not who he was; for *Marcellus* had given a Commandment to ſave him. If ſuch a danger could not diſturb the intention of *Archimedes*, for the *ſaving of a City*, the *ſaving of a Soul*, does juſtly challenge a greater intention in every Duty we perform to God.

4. To attend without diſtraction, implies the *higheſt concernedneſs of Soul.* Faith ſhould be ſtrong, and conſtrain the Mind to be ſerious; things inviſible ſhould be repreſented ſo *evident* and *ſubſtantial*, as if they were *moſt viſible and apparent.* God ſhould be addreſſed, as if he appeared to us as he did to *Abraham*; as if he talked with us, as he did to the Children of *Iſrael* from Mount *Sinai*; With humbleneſs of Mind, and ſelf-abaſement, conſidering our diſtance, guilt and vileneſs: we ſhould cry out, *Let not the Lord be angry if we intreat the forgiveneſs of Sin, and that our Souls may live before him!* Now we *ſhould ſtir up our ſelves and take hold of God*, Iſa. 64. 7. Now his Strength, and his Son, and his Covenant may be laid hold on; within a little while, it may be too late, and impoſſible to do it. We ſhould be concerned in all Duties, and perform them with ſuch a ſolicitous care, as if we ſaw the Dart of the *laſt Enemy ready to pierce us*, and the Grave open for us; as if we ſaw the *Judge upon the great white Throne*, and *all both ſmall and great ſtanding before God*, and *the Books opened*, that they might be *judged according to their Works*, Rev. 20. 11, 12. There ſhould be a concernedneſs of Spirit, as if we ſaw the

*World in a flame, Hell naked* before us, and we beheld the *flashings of eternal fire*, as if we saw *Heaven opened, and all that Glory that is there.* Weight, and Worth, and Necessity command Concernedness; now when we attend on God, we draw nigh to him about those things that are of most absolute necessity, and of the greatest worth and weight imaginable.

5. To attend without distraction implies, *the fullest bent and inclination of heart*; there must be *intensivum velle*, a strong propension of the Will towards God, and this is expressed by longing, by panting, Psal. 42. 1. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.* 'Tis the Lord himself that thus determines the Will towards himself; and this he doth without compulsion; for he alters the Nature and Inclination of it, so that the Will being *made free by Divine Grace*, uses its *liberty aright*, and chuses *God as its end*, and the *way of his Testimonies.* Such an end, such a way is most worthy to be chosen. The Heart now designs and desires the injoying Fellowship with God, as infinitely more valuable than all other Enjoyments. And this full bent of the Heart, mightily fixes it; so that the *stream of the Affections* is kept the better in *one undivided Channel*: When the Psalmist said, there was *none on Earth he desired besides God*, it plainly shewed, that his desire after God swallowed up his desire after worldly things; and when he says, *Whom have I in Heaven but God!* He signifies that he should not count *Heaven it self* to be *Heaven indeed*, without the *Enjoyment of God there.*

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6. To attend without distraction, implies *a sincere care to please the Lord in that attendance, his Approbation being principally minded.* Man's good thoughts and word, are more easily gained, but the *Jew inwardly, his praise is not of Man but of God*, Rom. 2. 29. And indeed all other Commendations are insignificant, unless the Lord commandeth, 2 *Cor.* 10. 18. The undistracted Attendant, studies to approve himself to God. With what confidence does *David* speak before his all-discerning Judge, *that he had walked in his integrity*, Psal. 26. 1. and Psal. 17. 3. *Thou hast proved my heart, thou hast visited me in the night: Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing.* He was not conscious to himself of regarded sin, or of allowed guile and negligence in the Lord's Service: Care to please that God whom we serve, is a necessary ingredient in every Service that is acceptable. This *care commands the heart* into the *presence* of God, and *keeps* it there; and he loves to *see Hearts* before him, *set on* him, and *seeking after him.*

7. To attend without distraction, implies *resisting all attempts to draw away the heart from God.* Satan and *Mammon* will be *knocking* at the *Door* of the Heart, while 'tis attending upon the Lord, and the *flesh which lusts against the spirit*, will be apt to shew its *treachery*, and to *open* the Door: Undistracted Attendants do use great Vigilancy, for they are full of Jealousie over themselves. They bid *Satan to get him behind them*, for they are *worshipping the Lord their God*, and 'tis wickedness and bold-

ness in him to disturb them in the Lord's Service; and when the *Affairs of the World* would *crowd* in upon them, they reply, They have *some greater* and more *important affairs* to mind, and therefore those *worldly matters* must be regarded only *at a convenient season*. At all times it should be our care to *keep unspotted from the World*; to *keep our selves that the wicked one touch us not*, 1 Joh. 5. 18. but this care should be greatest when our approaches to God are neares. For if the World and the God of it should *all bespatter* and *defile* us, even while we are engaged in *holy Ordinances*, how *uncomely* would *this* be! How *inexcusable* should *we* be! How much *displeased* would the *Lord* be!

8. To attend without distraction, implies *refusing to be diverted from attending upon God without great necessity*. Indeed since the Lord *will have mercy and not sacrifice*; he will excuse our attendance, when unavoidable necessity, and the Mercy he requires us to shew, does divert us from it; but Hearts that are truly gracious, are troubled when they are thus diverted. When our Lord admonishes his Disciples to pray, that *their flight might not be in the Winter, nor on the Sabbath-Day*, Mat. 24. 20. he plainly intimates, that to be *disturbed on the Sabbath*, and to be *hindred* from engaging in *Ordinances*, ought to be lookt upon as a *very great Affliction*. Carnal Minds are glad of occasions that seem to justifie their omission of Holy Duties; but sanctified and renewed hearts are otherwise minded; they are sensible that Worship and Duty is owing to the

the Lord, and that *he* is *not benefited*, but *they*, by giving it. The *Farm*, the *Merchandiſe*, and things of that nature cannot hinder their coming to the *Marriage Supper*. They are deaf to the perſwaſions of carnal Relations and Friends, who would draw them off from Exerciſes of Religion. They know that *time* was given them, not that chiefly they ſhould mind *things temporal*, but thoſe *things that are inviſible and eternal*. To be *far from God is the way to periſh*, 'tis *good*, 'tis *pleaſant*, 'tis *ſafe* to be *near him*, Pſal. 73. 27. To be diverted from attending on the Lord, is to be diverted from the moſt *bleſſed thing* on earth, Pſal. 65. 4. *Bleſſed is the Man whom thou chuſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee that he may dwell in thy Courts, we ſhall be ſatisfied with the goodneſs of thy Houſe, even of thy holy Temple.*

9. To attend without diſtraction, implies *abiding with God, and perſeverance in his Service*. The undiſtracted attendant, is ſtedfaſt in the Lord's Covenant; his Bonds and Cords, are *Bonds* and *Cords of love*; and why ſhould any ſay, *Let us break theſe Bonds aſunder, and caſt away theſe Cords from us?* They were good words, and they that ſpake them were as good as their word, Jer. 50. 5. *They ſhall aſk the way to* Zion, *with their faces thitherward, ſaying, Come and let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that ſhall not be forgotten.* This perpetual Covenant ſhould be kept in *everlaſting remembrance*; and there is good reaſon for it, Pſal. 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto ſuch as keep his*

*Covenant and his Teſtimonies.* He that attends without diſtraction, ceaſes not to be an Attendant, but perſeveres in his Lord's Service; he takes care to have *his Loyns girt about* for ſpiritual Labour, *his Light burning*, for he is waiting and expecting his *Lord's coming*. An ancient Father wiſhed when Chriſt came that he might find him, *aut precantem aut prædicantem*, either *Praying* or *Preaching*. Every Chriſtian ſhould have a wiſh of this nature, that he may be found either *praying*, *hearing*, or *practiſing* what he hears. *Bleſſed are thoſe Servants whom the Lord when he comes ſhall find ſo doing*, Luke 12. 43.

In the third place I am to aſſign the *reaſons* why with ſuch care, we ſhould *take heed of diſtraction in the Lord's Service*: And theſe *Reaſons* ſhall be of two ſorts.

The firſt ſort ſhall be drawn from the *evil* of diſtraction.

The ſecond ſort ſhall be drawn from *the benefit* of attending without diſtraction.

The firſt ſort of reaſons ſhall be drawn from the *evil* of diſtraction, and the evil of this I ſhall make manifeſt and apparent.

1. In diſtraction there is *great irreverence and contempt of God.* Wherefore *doth the wicked contemn God?* ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 10. 13. There is no reaſon he ſhould do it; nay, there is all the reaſon in the World to the contrary, that he ſhould adore and ſerve him. The wicked contemn God by running away from him,

him, and a total neglect of his Service; but his Attendants contemn him when they make their addreſſes to him, if inſtead of offering *ſpiritual Sacrifices*, they *offer Affronts* to God, and there is a *ſpecial offenſiveneſs* in ſo doing; therefore he proteſts that ſuch Service were a *trouble to him*, that he was *weary to bear them*, that his *Soul hated them*, Iſa. 1. 14. If a Man ſhould addreſs an earthly Potentate, and inſtead of ſpeaking to the King, ſhould ever and anon talk to ſome inferiour Perſon that ſtood by, inſtead of hearing the King, ſhould turn his Eye and his Ear away from him, and not mind a word he ſhould ſay; Royal Majeſty would look upon this as an Affront inſufferable. But thus in diſtracted Duties, the King of Glory is treated, the *Mind* is upon the *Creature*, and this and that and t'other worldly affair, when the *Tongue* is *ſpeaking* to the *Creatour*; and what *he* ſpeaks, the *Ear* many times *hears not*, and the Heart is farther off from *heeding*: Thus what would not be done to a *Governour*, is done to the higheſt, and beſt, and greateſt King, whoſe *dreadful Name* all *the Earth ſhould ſtand in awe of.*

2. In diſtraction there is a *taking of God's Name in vain*, the third Commandment is broken, the Tranſgreſſors whereof, the Lord ſays, he *will not hold guiltleſs*, Exod. 20. 7. *This* may be called the *firſt Commandment with threatning*, as the *fifth* is ſaid to be the *firſt Commandment with promiſe*: For though in the ſecond Commandment mention is made of the *Mercy* of God, and of his *Jealouſie*, yet

the one is provoked by them that *hate God*; the other is promiſed to *them that love him, and keep his Commandments*; ſo that Commandments *in the general* are mentioned, *not this particular* Commandment *ſpecified*. To what *purpoſe* is a Duty performed, where *diſtraction is allowed?* The Name of God is not hallowed but profaned, when it *ſounds* from the Lips, but the heart *thinks not of*, nor *ſanctifies him* whoſe Name it is. When diſtraction prevails, all Ordinances are engaged in vain; nay, there is not only a *miſſing* of that *benefit* that is promiſed unto *ſerious Engagers*, but guilt is contracted; and by ſuch *diſtracted Duties*, the *diſtance* becomes *greater* between *God* and the *performers*. *Bernard* complains, *Aliud canto, aliud cogito: I ſing and pray one thing, and think another.* And afterwards, *Væ mihi quoniam ibi pecco ubi peccata emendare debeo. I commit faults, wo is me! even in thoſe Duties, by which my faults ſhould be amended.* It was well he ſaid, *Wo is me!* Becauſe of theſe diſtractions; elſe God would have ſaid, *Wo to thee*, becauſe of them. And indeed where they are not minded nor bewailed, the caſe is woful. God takes it amiſs, and is very much diſpleaſed, that ſuch Hypocrites take his Name into their Mouths.

3. In diſtraction there is a *ſlighting of Jeſus the Advocate and Mediatour*. Our Lord's Heart and Soul was in the Work of our Redemption; he was forward to *undertake* it, Heb. 10. 7. *Lo I come to do thy Will, O God*, and as willing to *finiſh it*; therefore in his greateſt Agonies,

nies, he ſaid, *Not my Will, but thine be done.* His *Holy Will*, notwithſtanding the *reluctancy* of *innocent Nature*, perfectly ſubmits to his Father's Pleaſure, *Joh.* 18. 11. *The Cup which my Father giveth me to drink, ſhall I not drink it?* How undiſtracted and fervent was our Lord in *praying* for his Church, *whom his Father had given him out of the World!* And now he is in Heaven, his Heart, and Thoughts, and Care, are upon, and for his Members Militant below: His interceſſion for them is inceſſant; his *Life now in Heaven*, is a *Life of continual interceding*; and the end of his interceſſion is, that the Bleſſings he has purchaſed by his Sufferings may be beſtowed upon Believers, whom he ſuffered for. Now what a Slight is put upon this *great High Prieſt*, who is paſſed *into the* Heavens, where he is ſo *ſerious to intercede*, if we are not *ſerious in petitioning!* If we *hardly think what we are doing*, when we are asking for *thoſe Bleſſings* which it coſt him not only *ſtrong Cries and Tears*, but his *Blood and Life* to purchaſe! They were *not ſmall things that the Blood of God* was a *price to purchaſe.* They are not ſmall *things that* a glorified *Redeemer* is *continually praying to the Father to beſtow.* If *thoſe things* are *ſcarce thought of*, when we *aſk* for them, they are moſt ſinfully undervalued: Chriſt *himſelf*, his *fulneſs*, his *ſatisfaction* and *interceſſion* are deſpiſed *altogether.*

4. In diſtraction there is a *grieving and vexing the Holy Spirit of God, by not valuing his proffered aſſiſtance.* When Chriſt aſcended *into* Heaven and was glorified *there*, he ſent

*the*

*the Spirit to abide with his Church for ever.* And one great work of the *Spirit* is to aid and *assist us in our Supplications.* He urges us to attend upon God, and is most ready to help us in that *attendance.* He is ready to fix our Minds, to incline our Hearts aright, to enlarge our Desire, to make *intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered,* Rom. 8. 26. He offers us his mighty Grace, which will enable us to pray prevailingly, to hear profitably, and fruitfully to improve the Ordinances of God. But distracted Attendants, are a *grief* and *vexation* to this *good Spirit,* they had rather *be without his help and grace than have it.* They chuse rather to *lose all their Duties* by a wretched *heartlessness and formality,* than be *assisted* to *take pains* in these Duties, that they may fare the better for them for ever.

5. In distraction there is an *undervaluing of all promised Mercies and Blessings, which God is ready to bestow on them that seriously attend upon him.* The Promises of the Gospel are made by him whose *faithfulness never fails*; and the *surety of the New Testament* stands *engaged* that they shall be *accomplished,* if they are by a true and lively Faith applied. These Promises are of things which we cannot be without, but we must needs be beyond conception miserable! *Peace with God* through Christ, and that *Peace within,* which passes all *Understanding, Grace* sufficient to *succour, support, strengthen* and *establish*; the good things of this Life, with a *Blessing from Heaven* upon them, and endless *Blessedness* in the World to come:

*These*

*Theſe are the things* that are promiſed; and who beſides God can make Promiſes ſo exceeding precious and ſo great? Now in our attendance upon him, he would have us expect what he has promiſed, for *he keeps truth for ever*, and *what he has promiſed he is able to perform*, Rom. 4. 21. Diſtracted Attendants upon the Lord, look upon theſe Promiſes with a ſtrange Eye; they believe not the *truth* of them, or are not perſwaded of the *worth* of them, and are very careleſs in pleading of them, and having no ſerious thoughts and deſires after the *promiſed Bleſſings*, the *threatned Curſes* fall upon them.

6. In diſtraction there is *great careleſneſs of our ſelves, and of our main concerns, thoſe of our immortal Souls.* In attendance upon God, our Souls are principally concerned. Now theſe *Souls themſelves* are of *more worth than the World*, and *ſo* are the *Bleſſings* we requeſt for them, and to be *heartleſs and trifling here*; what Apology can be made for it? What is come to the Soul of Man, that it ſhould be ſo mindleſs of it ſelf! That it ſhould have ſo few Thoughts about it ſelf! Diſtracted Duties, argue an *indifferency* what becomes of the precious Soul to eternity; and an indifferency muſt needs cauſe a miſcarriage and ruine, ſince *ſtriving to enter in at the ſtrait gate* is neceſſary, *Luk.* 13. 24. and Heaven will be miſs'd of, *there be not an holy violence to take it.* In diſtracted Services Men put a *cheat* upon themſelves, they only *ſeem to run*, and ſo they will *really miſs* the *prize*; and in this Diſtraction there

there is *great Hypocriſie*, which is moſt hateful to God, and which our Lord has denounced ſo *many Woes* againſt, *Mat.* 2. Hypocrites Duties, are a moſt *provoking Mockery*; and tho *Hell will have all the Wicked at laſt turned into it*, yet in a ſpecial manner 'tis called the *portion of Hypocrites, as well as Unbelievers*, Mat. 24. 51. compared with *Luk.* 12. 46.

7. Diſtraction *expoſes us to Satan*: Diſtracted Attendants are Servants of the Lord only in *ſhew*, but Satan *is really ſerved and gratified* by their Duties. They expoſe themſelves to this Enemy both as an *Accuſer*, and a *Tempter*. When their *Hearts are abſent* from the Lord's Work, in which they engage, *Satan's Mouth is open againſt them.* He boldly charged *Job* with being a *Mercinary Servant*, and yet there was no ground for it, Job. 1. 9. *Doth* Job *fear God for nought?* But *put forth thy hand now and touch what he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy face*, v. 11. And if he charged ſo *good and upright a Man without ground*, ſurely he will be forward to accuſe when there is *abundant ground for the Accuſation. See*, will Satan ſay, *how ſuch and ſuch do ſerve the Lord with Duties that are things of nought, and good for nothing. See how they mock the God of Heaven to his very Face.* And upon ſuch diſtracted Service, as he is forward to be an Accuſer, ſo he has great advantage as a *Tempter.* Such Duties bring in *no ſtrength* from above to withſtand him. Nay, the Lord is provoked to withdraw further; and thoſe whom God *leaves to themſelves*, how eaſily *does Satan lead them Captive at his pleaſure!*

*sure!* All Strays are seized by the God of this World, how close should we cleave to the God of Heaven!

8. Distraction is a *great obstruction to the efficacy and success of Ordinances.* If we pray as if we prayed not, shall we speed? If we hear as if we heard not, shall we profit? Will doing the Work of the Lord deceitfully, be encouraged by the vouchsafing of Grace, or rewarded with Glory? Carefulness is one effect and *fruit of godly Sorrow*, 2 Cor. 7. 11. *For behold this self-same that ye sorrowed after a godly sort what carefulness it wrought in you*: And as I said before, this Carefulness is an *ingredient* in every acceptable Duty. The distracted *Attendant* has little care that God may be pleased; he cares not that Ordinances in the truest, in a spiritual sense, be beneficial to him: God's Anger therefore remains and abides upon him; nay, he grows more angry because of his negligence: Ordinances leave him as they found him, not at all more safe or better; nay, the Word not being a *Saviour of Life to Life*, proves a *Saviour of Death to Death*, 2 Cor. 2. 16. 'Tis sad to have the *means of Salvation* ineffectual *to Salvation*, but 'tis worse by these very means of Salvation being distractedly used, to have Destruction *promoted.*

Thus have I made apparent those Evils that are in Distraction.

The second sort of Reasons shall be drawn from the *benefit of attending upon the Lord without*

*out diſtraction.* The benefit of ſuch kind of *Attendance* I ſhall make manifeſt.

1. Attenders without diſtraction, *their Hearts are right with God,* he is in Chriſt well pleaſed with them and with their ſerious Services. That which the Lord *chiefly minds* and *calls for,* it is their *care* to *give to him*; and that is their *very heart. The Lord rejoyceth in the habitable parts of the Earth, and his delights are with the Sons of Men,* Prov. 8. 31. The Sons of Men that ſeek him, and whoſe Hearts are perfect with him. As the wicked Man himſelf is hateful, ſo the *Sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord,* becauſe he never offers his Heart; God is not in his Thoughts even when he is offering Sacrifice to him, but *the Prayer of the upright is his delight,* Prov. 15. 8. The Heart-ſearcher ſees how his heart and his words agree together. The Lord is very much pleaſed to behold the Thoughts called off from other things, becauſe He's preferr'd before them all, to behold the Mind fixed upon himſelf, and the Soul with great vigour deſiring his Grace, his Strength, and his Salvation, as that which is moſt worthy to be longed for. That's the Language of Heaven to ſuch an one, Cant. 2. 14. *Let me ſee thy Countenance, let me hear thy voice; for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*

2. Attenders without diſtraction *draw very near to God.* And if 'tis ſo good to draw near to him, it follows then, the nearer *the better.* There are ſome whom the Lord beholds afar off, thoſe whoſe proud and hard hearts were never

never truly humbled for sin, their iniquity is a Wall of *Partition* between God and them: When the Spouse of Christ her self was given to sleep, though her *heart* waked, and was *loth* and *lazy* in too great a degree in the seeking of her Lord, she complains thus. *My beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone, I sought him but could not find him, I called him but he gave me no answer*, Cant. 5. 6. But undistracted attendance shews great diligence, vehemency of desire, and *truth in the inward parts*, and God is *nigh to them that call upon him in truth*; he is nigh to them not in some things only, but *in all that they call upon him for*, Deut. 4. 7. God is nigh, as one reconciled, as one nearly related, as a most compassionate and ready helper, as a sure Shield and Buckler, as a full and *all-sufficient Fountain*, from whom *whatever* is needed may be derived.

3. Attenders without distraction *know still more of God*; they come to be more intimately acquainted with him, and that acquaintance is of all other, the most high and beneficial. Job. 22. 21. *Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come to thee.* To understand the *Secrets of Nature*, to understand *humane affairs*, and how they may be *most prudently* ordered: To understand the Ordinances of Heaven, the Motions and Influences of the Sun and Moon, and Stars, are pieces of knowledge very desirable; but to know *the Lord himself*, is a Wisdom far beyond all other. Now the undistracted *Attendant* follows on *to know the Lord*, and gives up himself more intirely to his Service, and God will manifest himself

himſelf to ſuch an one in a more peculiar way. Pſal. 25. 14. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant.* And their knowledge ſhall *not* be only *notional*, but to their *great ſatisfaction* it ſhall be *experimental.* When others only hear of God by *the hearing of the Ear*, they *ſhall taſte and ſee that he is gracious.* Pſal. 34. 8, 9, 10. *Oh taſte and ſee that the Lord is good, bleſſed is the Man that truſteth in him. Oh fear the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him. The young Lyons lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that ſeek the Lord ſhall not want any good thing.*

4. Attenders without diſtraction, *have moſt of the Grace of God, and greateſt ſtrength from him.* The Lord μείζονα δίδωσι χάριν, gives *Grace that is greater* than the greateſt earthly things, or he *gives more Grace*, Jam. 4. 6. ſtill *more and more* he is ready to communicate; and moſt of all to them that are moſt humble, and that *draw neareſt* to him; ſuch as are bent upon it to *ſeek the Lord, and his Strength, and his Face evermore*, ſhall not ſeek him, his Face or Strength in vain. Holy *David* who was a ſincere ſeeker, declares the good ſucceſs he had, Pſal. 138. 3. *In the day when I cryed, thou anſwereaſt me, and ſtrengthneaſt me with ſtrength in my Soul*, and as the *ſtrength of God* did reſt on him, ſo the *Face of God* did ſhine upon him to his great *Conſolation*, Pſal. 25. 5, 6. *His Glory is great in thy Salvation, for thou haſt made him moſt bleſſed for ever, thou haſt made him exceeding glad with thy Countenance.* The undiſtracted

*Attendant*

*Attendant* thrives amain, he grows rich in Faith, rich in Aſſurance, rich in Experience. He *increaſeth with the increaſes of God*, he *grows up into him in all things who is his Head*, and approaches ſtill nearer to *the meaſure of the Stature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*. And where there is the moſt of Grace, uſually there is the moſt of Peace and Joy, *perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God*, and the *Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt* commonly keep pace, and go hand in hand *together*.

5. *Attenders* without diſtraction, *are moſt victorious over their ſpiritual Enemies*; being ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his Might, the power of the Enemies of their Salvation can prevail but little. The nearer any approach unto God, the *farther they come out from the World*, and they are the more fortified againſt it, both on *the right hand and on the left*; the leſs do they mind the world's *honour or diſhonour*, *evil report or good report from it*, 2 Cor. 6. 7, 8. They are *not* afraid of *the World's terrour*, and whatever the World offers to them, they ſee enough in God to make the higheſt earthly Enjoyments deſpiſed in compariſon. Thus the innumerable Multitude of Stars, though never ſo glittering before, do all diſappear at the Sun riſing. Undiſtracted Attenders fix their Eye on God, and the more the inviſible God is ſeen, the more all viſible things will vaniſh into nothing. The Pſalmiſt had caſt his Eye upon the proſperity of the wicked, and began to admire it; he comes into the Sanctuary of

God, and looking upon God, he now wonders at his own Folly in admiring so poor a *thing* as a worldly happiness, and the Temptation that was so strong, is overcome. Safety from the most dangerous Enemies is of the Lord; they whose *thoughts* are upon his *Name*, find it a *strong Tower*. *Satan* and *Mammon* are less able to beguile them, and the lustings of the *Flesh*, become weaker and weaker against the *Spirit*, and as they find sin more and more destroyed, so they may behold the last Enemy *Death without a Sting*, and the *Grave* as having *lost its Victory*.

6. Attenders without distraction, have *most approbation from their own Consciences*. Conscience is a Monitor unto Duty, and a diligent observer how 'tis performed. It will condemn Lazineſs, it will commend labour of Love; it will upbraid the Evil and Slothful with their vain Oblations, but to the undistracted Attendant, it will say, *Well done good and faithful Servant!* And how much *Joy and Peace* is there in the *Testimony* of a good *Conscience!* 2 Cor. 1. 12. and we find a condemning and an approving Conscience compared together; the condemning Conscience, is the forerunner of God's Condemning, and the approbation of the Conscience is the forerunner of God's Absolution. 1 John 3. 20, 21. *If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things: Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* Duties come off with great comfort when we have been *intent and affected*, when God has been

*attentive*

*attentive to us*, when we behold his Face shining, and find his Hand open; and Conscience bears us witness, that we have been seriously, and the Lord has been graciously minding what we have been doing.

7. Attenders without distraction, are *most beneficial to others*. They have the most publick *Spirits*, and all do fare the better, for that interest they have in Heaven, which they daily improve for all. How much is the Church of God beholding to them, who will not hold their Peace day or night, who will give the Lord *no rest until he make* Jerusalem *a praise on the Earth!* Isa. 62. 6, 7. When the wickedness of *Israel* had made a great breach for the Wrath of God to break in upon them to consume them; *Moses* attends upon God, and intercedes with such *intention* and concernedness, and fervency, that the Wrath of God is appeased, and the ruine prevented, though it was at the door, Psal. 106. 23. *Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not* Moses *his chosen stood before him in the breach to turn away his Wrath, lest he should destroy them.* Whole Nations reap the benefit of such undistracted and prevailing Intercessions. The Apostle tells us, that *Elias* was a Man of like Passions with others, yet he was so intent and fervent in Prayer, that he *opened Heaven*, and fetch'd *Rain from thence*, and *the Earth brought forth her fruit*, and an end was put to a terrible Famine, which had lasted for several Years together, *Jam.* 5. 18. The *effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man avails much*, he prevails

for others as well as for himſelf. *Lot* was a *righteous Man, and vexed his righteous Soul*, becauſe of the Sodomites *unlawful Deeds*, 2 Pet. 2. 8. yet his Deliverance from *Sodom*'s Flames is aſcribed unto *Abraham*'s *interceſſion*, Gen. 19. 29. *And it came to paſs when God deſtroyed the Cities of the* Plain, *that God remembred* Abraham, *and ſent* Lot *out of the midſt of the overthrow, when he overthrew the Cities wherein* Lot *dwelt.* Saints ſhould pray harder one for another, and pray for them that are without, with more earneſtneſs, that greater Multitudes may be called out of the World, and brought into the Church, and ſecured from the Perdition of ungodly Men. Undiſtracted Attendants upon God, are *Pillars* to bear up, what elſe would fall into ruine. The Church, the Nation in which they live, the whole World is beholding to them, as well as particular Perſons for whom they are concerned, and whom they bear upon their hearts before the Lord.

I have done with the Reaſons of the *Doctrine.*

In the fourth place *I* am to anſwer ſome *Caſes of Conſcience*, about theſe Diſtractions in attending upon God, that ſo *Difficulties* which are apt to perplex the Mind in *this matter* may be removed.

And CASE I. is this,

*Whether the Thoughts cannot be off from God in the leaſt when we attend upon him, but there muſt be a culpable and ſinful Diſtraction?*

To

To this I anſwer.

1. In all our holy Duties, there ſhould be *a conſtant overawing ſenſe of God* upon our Spirits, from the beginning to the end of them: Slaviſh fear alienates the heart from God, but Filial Reverence keeps the heart cloſe to him. That part of the Duty is loſt in which the ſenſe of God is baniſhed.

2. Something *elſe beſides God*, may be thought of in Duties, and yet this is not Diſtraction. To think of our ſins when we confeſs them, is our Duty, and to recollect the circumſtances by which they have been heigtned and rendred more exceeding ſinful, Iſa. 59. 12. *For our Tranſgreſſions are multiplied before thee, and our ſins teſtifie againſt us; for our tranſgreſſions are with us, and as for iniquities we know them.* Our Wants alſo we ought to think of, and the neceſſity of having them ſupplied; and the all-ſufficient *Jehavah*, is ſufficient to ſupply all needs whatſoever, be the Wants never ſo great and many, and the Perſons that apply to him, never ſo vaſt a Multitude. The Bleſſings we deſire ought alſo to be thought of: Others alſo which we pray for, may be in our Minds when we are before God, with their Diſtreſſes under which we would fain be helpful to them, by our *Supplications* on their *behalf*. It was not Diſtraction in the Apoſtle, but matter of thankſgiving to the Lord, that when he was at the Throne of Grace, *Timothy* was in his thoughts and remembrance, 2 Tim. 1. 3. *I thank God whom I ſerve from my fore-fathers with pure Conſcience, that without ceaſing I have*

*remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.*

3. Our Thoughts muſt *not run out ſo much* upon the *matter of our Duties*, but that there muſt be a quick and continual return to God, the Object whom we worſhip. We muſt not ſo much be thinking what we are praying for, but we muſt ever be minding him whom we are praying to. The Pſalmiſt ſays, Pſal. 142 2. *I poured out my complaint before him, I ſhewed before him my trouble.* He *thought* of his *trouble*, but had alſo a *ſenſe* he was before God, who he knew could be a preſent help to him.

CASE II. Whether it *be Diſtraction and withdrawing from God, to think at all of our worldly buſineſs and affairs?*

To this I anſwer.

1. In ordering of *our earthly Concerns, and in all our ways God is to be acknowledged*: His direction makes us act prudently, and his Bleſſing makes our Labour proſperous The *Bleſſing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no ſorrow with it*, Prov. 10. 22. His Bleſſing removes the Curſe which ſin had brought, and very much cures *the vexatious Vanity* of the Creature. The Word of God is to be eyed as the Rule which we ought to walk by, in our Secular Affairs; we ſhould inquire after his Will, and aim at his Glory in every thing which we do: When Secular Actions are under the *conduct and management* of *Religion*, there is not only a Bleſſing upon them, but alſo a great Beauty in them.

2. Diligence and *Prudence in our wordly affairs,*

*fairs, is a Duty*, and this cannot be *without thoughts about them.* Honeſt Projects, and wiſe Contrivances, are not at all to be diſcommended; what is ſaid of the *Husbandman's Skill*, is applicable to Diſcretion in any other Calling. Iſa. 28. 26, 29. *God doth inſtruct him to diſcretion, and doth teach him.* A prudent thoughtfulneſs in theſe matters, *cometh from the Lord of Hoſts, which is wonderful in Counſel, and excellent in working.* To be without heed and care in the Works of our Calling, is ſinful and ſcandalous, and 'tis to walk diſorderly. Our Lord plainly ſignifies there muſt be care and fidelity in worldly things. Luk. 16. 11. *If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous* Mammon, *who will commit to your truſt the true Riches?* The good Man muſt needs think of his Secular Affairs, elſe he could not *guide them with diſcretion*, Pſal. 112. 5.

3. In a ſpecial manner we are to take heed, when engaged in worldly buſineſs, *of being too long without thinking of God*, and *lifting up our hearts to him.* Worldly Men when in the Sanctuary, and they ſeem to be worſhipping the God of Heaven, their *thoughts* are upon the World, becauſe their Affections run that way. Thus the Saints ſhould do, when at the *Exchange*, or in their Shops, or at the Market; their hearts even then ſhould frequently be with God; this would not be hypocriſie but ſincerity in them, and worldly buſineſs would ſucceed the better for it. 'Tis a proper *Ejaculation* at every turn in our Secular Matters. Pſal. 143. 8. *Cauſe me to know the way wherein I*

*should walk, for I lift up my Soul unto thee.* And our ordinary Employments though never so advantageous and delightful, should not be so taking, but that with the greatest readiness and joy we should cease from them when called to give our *Attendance* upon God.

CASE III. Whether *the best of Men while in this World, can be totally free from Distraction in holy Duties?*

Unto this I answer.

1. The *natural Vanity* of the Imagination, is not perfectly cured in any Saint alive, and this in some degree will discover it self; the most serious and solid mind has something of levity and frothiness in it, and this froth will be working up, notwithstanding all endeavours to suppress it. Evil is present with the best, when they would do their very best. The Apostle acknowledges there was *a law of sin in him*, Rom. 7. 21. In-dwelling sin remains even there where Grace reigns, and is but too active in the Saints, when they desire to be most active in the Lord's Service; therefore we read that the most spiritual Sacrifices are acceptable through Jesus Christ, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. Though the *House be spiritual*, and the *Priesthood Holy*, and the *Sacrifice spiritual*, yet all this *by it self cannot procure acceptation*; there are some sinful imperfections, some *Ebullitions of Vanity*, as well as *actings of grace*; which to cover, there is great need of the Mediation and Righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

2. Saints are not *so vigilant*, and *take not such*

*ſuch pains* with their *hearts*, as they ought and might do, and before they are aware are diſtracted in their Thoughts. The *Sluggard's Field was all grown over with Thorns, and Nettles had covered the Face thereof*, Prov. 24. 31. The heart of Man by Nature brings forth nothing but Weeds; and though the heart be renewed, yet theſe Weeds will preſently *ſpring* up in it, if it be not kept with conſtant care.

3. Though Believers are *ſtill haunted and peſter'd with ſome vain thoughts*, yet 'tis *poſſible for them to be freed more and more from them.* The more they are *renewed* in the Spirit of their Mind, they will be able to ſerve the Lord with greater intention of mind, and ſeriouſneſs of Spirit. The more your reaſon gets power over your fancy, and the more Grace gets power over your Reaſon, and the more you call in help from Heaven; the more fixed your hearts will be upon God, and the Work of God. Taking pains with the heart in Duty, is hard labour, but the Lord is ready to ſucceed it.

CASE IV. Whether *a true Believer may not ſometimes perform Duties ſo diſtractedly, as to reap no benefit at all by them?* I anſwer.

1. The *more there is of Diſtraction* in Duties, the *leſs Spiritual advantage* is like to be reaped by them; the more frequently the heart does ſtart away from God, when 'tis engaged in his worſhip, the more of obſtruction there is unto the Communication of Grace; the nearer we draw to God, the nearer he draws to us; if we at any time withdraw, no wonder if he with-

withdraw likewiſe. And the *leſs a Saint is troubled* at his *own Diſtractions*, his heart is certainly in the worſt frame, and God is the more diſpleaſed.

2. Some Duties may be ſo diſtractedly performed as to *be totally loſt*. 'Tis true, the Union between Chriſt and Believers is inſeparable, and nothing ſhall ſeparate them from the love of God in him; for he makes inceſſant interceſſion for all his Members: 'Tis alſo certain that the Spirit abides in all true Believers, and will never quite leave them who are his Temples and Habitation, and the Spirit ever dwelling in them, they ſhall ever continue in a ſtate of Grace, and ſin ſhall never recover its Dominion over them; and yet ſometimes they may fall into *particular acts* of ſin; and ſome *particular Duties* may be performed after ſuch a careleſs and diſtracted manner, as to become ſin. We read Pſal. 80. 4. *O Lord God of Hoſts, how long wilt thou be angry with the Prayers of thy People?* Prayers of Saints may be unacceptable. Sometimes Unbelief, Deſpondency and Diſcontent, and Impatience, quite ſpoils Prayer: How could the Lord be pleaſed with *Jonah*'s Petition? Jon. 4. 2, 3. *And he prayed to the Lord and ſaid, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my ſaying when I was yet in my Country? Therefore I fled before unto* Tarſhiſh, *for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, ſlow to anger and of great kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil. Therefore now, O Lord, take I beſeech thee my life from me, for 'tis better for me to die than to live.* Sometimes diſtra-

ſtraction and deadneſs, and a carnal worldly frame of Spirit, may hinder a Duty from doing any good to the performer of it, though he be good in the main. The perfection of ſincerity may be ſo much wanting in ſome Services, as that they may prove *altogether unavailable*, Rev. 3. 2. *Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found thy Works perfect before God.*

3. I add further that Duties may be *ſo performed by Believers themſelves*, that the *bad manner of doing them, ſhall coſt them very dear.* A true Saint may do his Duty in a way ſo diſpleaſing to God, that his Duty ſhall be his Death. Thus the *Corinthians* came together to the Lord's Table, not for the *better*, but for *the worſe*, there was not that care to keep their hearts fixt upon God, and fit for Communion with him, and the Holy Supper was profaned, by a prevailing of ſenſuality, and Divine Diſpleaſure broke out againſt them, 1 *Cor.* 11. 30. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep*; and they were thus *chaſtned of the Lord*, and ſome with ſtripes that proved deadly, that they *might not be condemned with the World*, v. 32. With what Intention, Vigilancy, and godly fear ſhould the Lord's People engage in his Work and Worſhip! He will be ſanctified by them that draw near to him, or he will be ſanctified upon them; he will manifeſt to their coſt, what an Holy and Jealous God he is: Therefore ſays the Apoſtle, *Do we provoke the Lord to Jealouſie, are we ſtronger than he?* 1 Cor. 10. 22.

CASE

CASE V. *What Distractions are they which are mercifully overlookt, and that hinder not the success of our Duties, nor the benefit of them?*

I answer.

1. The Lord in much Compassion overlooks those Distractions in his Service, that *are grievous to us, and which we heartily lament.* He passes by the greatest sins, for the great *Propitiations* sake, if there be *Contrition* in him that has been guilty of them. Psal. 51. 17. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* And if the heart be broken, because religious Duties are so broken and *interrupted* by vain *imaginations*, he will not withdraw his Presence, because of these weaknesses that are bewailed, but according to his Promise, *He will be nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and will save such as are of a contrite Spirit*, Psal. 34. 18.

2. Distractions shall be pass'd by that are *prayed against, before they come, and are resisted when they are come.* He that would worship God with *great intention* of Soul, 'tis a sign his heart is good and honest, and that very Will is wrought in him by the Lord's own Grace, and is pleasing in the Lord's Eyes; and 'tis further pleasing to him, when he beholds a Soul checking *these Distractions* as often as they do occur, and manifesting a constant dislike of them. The Psalmist tells us, *That he hated vain thoughts*, but he loved both the Word

Word and the Work of God, *Psal.* 119. 113. His hatred of vain *thoughts*, was well taken, the *intruding* of them though they were hated, was overlookt in Mercy. And this hatred of them, and perpetual conflicting with them is a good way to be rid of them. And certainly those Distractions shall not be imputed to us, which by checking of them and crying to Heaven for help, we do in some measure prevail against.

3. Distractions shall be overlookt, the *causes of which we endeavour to remove*; when we are upon our guard against the *Cares of this Life*, *deceitful Riches*, and *those Lusts and Pleasures*, that would command our *thoughts* and entice away our *hearts* from God, and cause *them to be absent*, when our Bodies are before him. 'Tis meer self-deceit to pretend we are desirous to be freed from the *effect*, if we like the cause; to say we dislike Distraction, if we are pleased well enough with those things whereby Distraction is caused. The Psalmist, who sighed and said, *Oh let me not wander from thy Commandments!* Psal. 119. 10. certainly he was watchful against, and groaned to be delivered from every thing that might *make him wander*: Therefore he wishes that his *heart might not be inclined to covetousness*, and that his *eyes might be turned away from beholding vanity*, ver. 36, 37. He knew very well, that coveting this World's Wealth, would eat out his Desires after God; and that eying and affecting vanity, would deaden and distract his heart in the Lord's Service.

4. Di-

4. Diſtractions though very horrid, ſhall not hinder the ſucceſs of Duties, which *the heart trembles at, and utterly deteſts and abhors.* Satan ſometimes apparently ſhews himſelf Devil indeed; he roars like a Lyon, he ſpeaks like the old Dragon. Hideous blaſphemous *Injections* and *thoughts*, are with *helliſh violence* born into the mind of a Believer while attending upon God; and the heart ſeems to be overſpread with the blackneſs of darkneſs, and with the wickedneſs of Hell it ſelf. But when theſe Satanical Injections are diſowned, and the Believer crys out, *Lord, I am oppreſſed, undertake for me!* And his Eye is unto Jeſus for ſuccour, who is ſo ready to help, τὸς καταδυναστευομένους ὑπὸ τὸ διαβόλου, thoſe who *by force are ready to be run down by the Devil*, Act. 10. 38. Satan ſhall not prevail againſt the Believer, but the Believer ſhall prevail with God for that Grace, which the evil one is ſo buſie to hinder him from partaking of.

5. Diſtractions ſhall in pity be covered, that are occaſioned by the *prevailing indiſpoſition of the head, or other corporal Maladies*, that are the effect of exceſſive pain, or of Melancholy, which cauſes great confuſion, in ſuch caſes the Lord's *compaſſion is drawn forth*, rather than his diſpleaſure provoked. We read, Pſal. 103. 13. *Like as a Father pittieth his Children, ſo the Lord pittieth them that fear him, for he knows their frame:* They are ſubject to much bodily indiſpoſition, as well as to *ſpiritual Infirmities.* Now what earthly Father is angry with a Child, becauſe he does not thoſe acts of Obedience

dience in ſickneſs, which he could and would readily do, were health continued? The Lord is infinitely beyond the tenderest earthly Parent in *pitying* and ſparing his Children: He obſerves the Spirit's willingneſs when the Fleſh is weak and indiſpoſed.

Diſtractions by ſudden *Accidents* alſo, ſhall not hinder Duties acceptance. *God will have mercy and not ſacrifice*, Mat. 9. 13. It will not diſpleaſe him, neither ſhall Duty be loſt, if we leave off Prayer to help one by us fallen into a *Swoon*, and that may expire without preſent ſuccour; in ſuch caſes his own Providence calls us off from a Duty of Religion, to an act of Mercy.

6. Diſtractions ſhall be paſt by, that *drive us to Chriſt for acceptance, and to the Spirit for greater aſſiſtance.* The looking upon the Defects in our Services, ſhould make us look unto our Lord *in whom we are compleat*, Col. 2. 10. and with a more intire dependance to reſt upon his righteouſneſs; hereby Chriſt is honoured, and the Father pleaſed, and a multitude of faults will be cover'd. But help againſt them muſt be deſired from the Holy Ghoſt. A gracious heart ſtill deſires renewed ſtrength and aid from the Spirit, to ſerve the Lord more acceptably: but a lazy reliance upon Chriſt, with an allowance of defects and diſtractions in the Duties we perform, muſt needs be a very great provocation.

CASE

CASE VI. *What course are Melancholick Persons to take in their Attendance on God, when Distractions arise from the prevalency of that Distemper?*

I answer.

1. They should take heed of *prolixity and length in holy Duties.* It is not length but life in these Duties that God looks at: It is a thought that may lodge in the Breast of an *Heathen*, but is unworthy of a Christian's heart, that he shall be heard ἐν τῇ πολυλογίᾳ αὐτῶν, for *his much speaking*, Mat. 6. 7. Christians should not think much of the time they spend with God; yet overdoing in this regard, is doing less, than if less were done. When Melancholy hinders Duties from being extended, as formerly with vigour and fervency they were; they that more briefly now perform them, should be the more frequent in short and holy Ejaculations. And they must be sure to take heed of taking more pains to fix their thoughts, than their heads will bear; for when their Heads are out of order, the more they labour to be intent, the further they are off from it, the disorder increases, and so does their discouragement. The Lord pities in such cases, and allows them to spare their pains, which are not only *fruitless* but *hurtful*, and to pity themselves, and not to attempt what a distempered Brain is unfit for.

2. Melancholick ones *must look unto Jesus in the due use of means, for the cure of Head Distempers.* How many corporal Maladies did our

our Lord heal in a miraculous manner, when he was here on Earth! And he has not put off his Compassions towards the Bodies of Men, now he is in Heaven. Though the skill of the Lutist be never so great, he can never make good Musick if the Lute it self be out of tune: Satan has great advantage by prevailing Melancholy to hinder Devotion, by the disorder of the Head, though the Heart be never so honest and well inclin'd. And our Lord very well knows this, and being a *merciful and faithful High-priest*, he is ready to succour in this case also, *Heb.* 2. *ult.* All power is given to him in Earth as well as Heaven, *all judgment committed to him*, Joh. 5. 22. so that all Distempers and Diseases come and go at his Command; and though Miraculous Cures are not now to be expected, yet something like them, sometimes has been wrought, in answer unto Prayer and Faith; and where there has been a stedfast looking to Jesus, there has been a mighty Blessing that has attended the means that have been used for the bringing of Blood, and Spirits, and Brain into better order.

3. There are *two great Duties* which those that are under *the power of Melancholy* are not *so fit for*: The one is *Meditation*, and the other *Self examination*. A distemper'd and disordered Head will make but sorry work of solemn Meditation; the Head will ake, the Mind will be lost in a cloud and mist of Confusion, and the evil-one will be ready to strike in, and make the Melancholick Man turn self-accuser,

and conſequently ſelf-tormenter. Such an one therefore ſhould be wary of attempting the Duty of ſet Meditation, but *that* and *reading* ſhould be joyned together. A ſhort conſideration of what is read there ſhould be, as the Head will bear, a deſire that the Heart may be affected, and by the Grace of God a reſolution to act and walk accordingly, and thoſe ſhould be the Petitions, *Incline my heart unto thy Teſtimonies*, and *make me to go in the path of thy Commandments!* Pſal. 119. 35, 36.

And as for *ſelf-examination*, Melancholick ones, being now not ſo well themſelves, they ſhould not be forward nor peremptory in paſſing Cenſures and Judgment upon themſelves, and they ſhould be aware that Satan is now buſie about them; and he being a lying Spirit, his Suggeſtions that they are Hypocrites and have no Grace, that they are caſt away, and utterly forſaken by the God of all Grace, ſhould in no wiſe be credited. Satan's Suggeſtions may be known by the deſign of them, which is not to quicken Souls to Duty, as the motions of the holy Spirit are, but to drive them away from God, and to make them ſay as he did in another caſe, ſince the caſe is deſperate, and all hope of Salvation gone, *Why ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 King. 2. 33.

4. Melancholick ones in the midſt of their Diſtractions *ſhould grieve that neither head nor heart are ſo diſpoſed to ſerve the Lord as they deſire.* That's proper language to be uſed which came

came out of the Mouth of holy *Job*, chap. 10. 15. *I am full of confuſion, ſee thou my Affliction!* And ſince they cannot actively glorifie God, by the exerciſe of ſtrong Faith, and vehement Love, and Joy and Delight in God, they ſhould glorifie him by an humble and patient ſubmiſſion to his Will.

When a melancholick Soul is quite emptied of all ſelf-confidence: and ſelf-conceit is in a manner annihilated: when under a great ſenſe of its own guilt and vileneſs, it looks unto Jeſus, and deſires by his Blood and Spirit to be juſtified, and waſhed, and made clean, when 'tis ready to acknowledge that if ever 'tis ſaved and brought to Heaven, Grace will be free, and ſuperabundant, becauſe one of the loweſt places in Hell has been deſerved, how far is fleſh from glorying! and hereby glory is given to the Lord. When melancholick ones, are ready in their greateſt Diſtractions and blackeſt darkneſs to juſtifie the Lord, *as righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works*, Pſal. 145. 17. and to condemn themſelves, becauſe formerly when their Heads were in better order, their Hearts were no better diſpoſed, and inclined to the Lord's Service, they pleaſe and glorifie him more than they are aware of. The more there is of ſelf-diſtruſt, ſelf-diſlike, ſelf-condemnation, humility, and patient bearing of Divine Indignation, becauſe of ſin that has been committed, *Mic.* 7. 9. the more honour by all this does really redound to God.

5. Let Melancholick ones take heed of being *quite ſtaved off from Duties and Ordinances*, though their *performances are but mean and ſorry*. The Lord can diſcern ſenſe in the Soul, when perhaps there is hardly ſenſe in the words, he takes notice of the gracious bent and good inclination of the heart towards himſelf, when the Thoughts againſt the Will do wander. *Hezekiah* had a moſt remarkable anſwer, and prayed to good purpoſe, when his Petitions were broken, and were rather chattering than Supplications. Iſa. 38. 14. *Like as a Crane, or a Swallow, ſo did I chatter, I did mourn as a Dove, mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppreſſed, undertake for me.*

CASE VII. What *are thoſe Diſtractions that make our attendance upon God altogether unacceptable to him, and unavailable to our ſelves?*

To this I anſwer.

1. Diſtractions make our Duties of none effect, *for which there is no concernedneſs, that God obſerves them, as long as Man can take no notice of them.* How can it be expected that the Lord ſhould have any gracious regard to them, who have no regard to him, or to his all-obſerving Eye? They that mind the praiſe of Men, and not the praiſe of God; and if Men do but approve and applaud, they are not troubled though God does not commend, but condemn them; the praiſe of Men is all the reward they are likely to have, Mat. 6. 5. *Verily*

*Verily, I say unto you they have their reward.* 'Tis an argument of a carnal heart, and that Duties are lost, when Distractions are not unwelcome or disliked, but the Heart is quiet enough with them. If this be the ordinary frame and temper of the Heart, to make nothing of heartless performances, as long as Man cannot see the Heart to be absent, 'tis a sign that hypocrisie reigns, and alas Hypocrites go to Hell through the Sanctuary; they tread the broad road, praying, hearing, receiving, all along, till they fall into eternal Condemnation.

2. Distractions make Duties of none effect, *that are pleaded for, as if there were nothing of sin or provocation in them.* The worse the Duties are, many times the Performers think them to be the better; they eye not their own Hearts and observe not their Deviations and Wandrings; they rest in the external Service, as if God would be pleased with the Work done and not mind the manner how. We read of some that were bold to expostulate with God, because they had fasted, and he took no notice of it, and yet there was good reason for his disliking what they did, because when *their Voice was heard on high*, their Hearts were inclined *to strife, debate, and wickedness*, Isa. 58. 3, 4. The Scribes and Pharisees contented themselves with an outside righteousness, they minded not that their Hearts should be serious and sanctified in their approaches to God; but this righteousness of theirs, our Lord pronounces insufficient, and

we must go beyond it, or we cannot go to Heaven.

3. Distractions make Duties of none effect, that *come from prevailing and allowed earthlimindedness*. How can a devoted Servant of *Mammon*, whose Heart worships *Mammon*, give acceptable attendance on God? His *Covetousness* after which *his Heart goes*, proves him an *Idolater*, Eph. 5. 5. and his Service is most abominable dissimulation. Let the Sin be what it will that is *beloved*; and there is a *resolution still* to *love* and *hide* and *spare* it, that sin will so distract and draw away the Heart from God, that no Duty that is done can please him. If we *cover our sins*, we shall not *prosper in our Services*: If we *hide our iniquities in our Bosoms*, because they are dear to us, God *will hide his Face* and refuse to hear us when we cry to him, *Isa.* 59. 2.

4. Distractions make Duties of none effect, *which hinder all manner of holy and spiritual affections, and desires after God*. How can the Lord accept of a Service, when the Heart is dead and cold as a stone, and altogether senseless and unconcerned that it is so? In such an heart there is no desire to know the Lord and his ways, no inclination to become like to him, or to enjoy any fellowship with him. The Apostle says, *Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably*, Heb. 12. 20. Those Distractions that *altogether hinder* the *acting* and *exercise of any grace* whatsoever; so that there is no Faith, no Love, no godly Sorrow, no hungring and thirsting after righteousness, certainly

tainly hereby also the success of Duties must be hindred.

5. Distractions make Duties of none effect, *which though reproved are not striven against*; but sloth and negligence, and formality in attendance upon God, are allowed of. *Abundance of Idleness*, was the *sin of Sodom*; and abundance of Idleness is to be found in many a Professour, even then when engaged in Duties of Religion- Such bestow no labour upon their Hearts, they *do not stir up themselves to take hold of God*, when *they call upon his Name*, Isa. 64. 7. *As Vinegar to the Teeth, and smoak to the Eyes* is very offensive, *so is the sluggard to him that sends him.* How then must the Lord needs be displeased with the slothful attendant, and slight his negligent Service! Will such Service be rewarded? No, no, so far from that, that it will be severely punished. He that took no pains to *improve his Talent*, is called a *wicked and slothful Servant*, Mat. 25. 26. and *v.* 30. the Sentence is past upon him, *Cast ye the unprofitable Servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.*

In the last place follows the *Application.* And here I shall

First, *Caution* you against the *Causes* of *Distraction.*

Secondly, *Expostulate* with you about these *Distractions.*

Thirdly, Direct unto *Remedies* against *Distractions.*

Fourthly, *Inſiſt* upon ſeveral *particular Duties*, and ſhew you how you may with leſs *Diſtraction* perform them.

Fifthly, Speak *Terrour* to *Sinners and Hypocrites*.

Sixthly, Conclude with *Comfort* and *Encouragement to Saints*, who would *fain do better, and with leſs Diſtraction attend* upon the *Lord*.

USE I. Shall be of *Caution againſt the Cauſes of Diſtraction*. If we would be delivered from the effect, we muſt find out, and remove the cauſe. Health and Eaſe are in vain hoped for, while no care is taken to remove the Cauſes of ſickneſs and pain. Serious in holy Duties we ſhall never be, whilſt we allow and cheriſh the Cauſes which make our Hearts rove and wander from God. Now the great *Cauſes of Diſtraction*, which I am to *warn you againſt*, and you are *to take heed of* are theſe.

1. I enter a *Caveat againſt corrupted Nature*. This is the Cauſe of Cauſes, if you trace up any ſin to its *original*, you will ſee *that* to be *original ſin*. Corrupted Nature never did any Duty well, has no care at all to do any thing better. Though the *firſt* Adam *died*, ſeveral *thouſand Years ago*, yet in a ſenſe he *lives* to *this Day*, he *walks* and *haunts* and *troubles his whole Poſterity*; and though *this old Man is Crucified with Chriſt*, yet he is not quite dead in any Believer, while the Believer lives upon the face of the Earth; and the evil that remains in him, will ſhew it ſelf *preſent with him*,

*him*, when he *would do that which is good*, Rom. 7. 21. We may truly cry out, *Myſtery of Iniquity, the great corruption of Nature, the Mother of wickedneſs and abominations of the Earth.* As ſin is from hence, ſo this is the grand obſtruction of the ſerious Service of God.

That depravation of humane Nature which is derived from the firſt *Adam*, makes the Heart of Man *deceitful above all things*, as well as *deſperately wicked*, and for *ſuch an Heart* in holy Duties to *act treacherouſly*, and to *ſtart aſide from God like a deceitful Bow*, is indeed, but to act *like it ſelf*. An Heart *totally carnal*, is ſo eſtranged from God, that it will never come near him; you ſhould therefore value the *promiſe of a new Heart and a new Spirit*, Ezek. 36. 26. and beg earneſtly that what is promiſed may be given to you; and though your Hearts are indeed renewed, the *renovation is but imperfect*, there is much of the *old nature ſtill remaining*, and this, if you are not very vigilant, will *catch away your thoughts*, while you are worſhipping the Lord, and bring a *damp and coldneſs upon your Hearts.*

Original Corruption has ſeiſed upon *all the Powers* of your Souls, and makes all of them averſe from attending upon God. The Imagination is ſtrongly inclined to wander far off, and the Heart and Affections but too apt to follow. If a free vent be but given to a ſinful and vain imagination, the product and offſpring of it will be diſtracting thoughts without number, like the *Locuſts*, *Frogs and Flies*, that fill'd the Land of *Egypt*, and with theſe

Religious

Religious Duties will be corrupted, and rendred unacceptable.

*Solomon* tells us, that when Man fell from original uprightneſs, *he ſought out many inventions*, Eccleſ. 7. *ult.* and all theſe Inventions were but *Diſtractions from God*, and *ways of departing from him*; a ſeeking and trying to find ſatisfaction and felicity elſewhere, which is indeed to be found in the Lord alone. Let this truth ſink deep into you, that your Hearts *naturally care not* for the Lord's Service; and if it be engaged in, they are very apt to be *careleſs* therein. Cry to Heaven, that you may be more *renewed in the Spirit of your Mind*, that the old Man may be more compleatly put off, and the new Man more fully put on. The leſs your Hearts are renewed and ſanctified, the more you are likely to be diſtracted; the more there is of corruption in you, it will the more diſcover it ſelf in the Duties of Religion which you do perform.

2. A Caution is to be given you *againſt your great Adverſary Satan.* He catches the Word of God out of the Heart, he draws away the Heart from the Word, and every other Duty. The Spirit of the Lord *helps our infirmities*, and *aſſiſts* us in Prayer: This evil Spirit *reſiſts* us in our Supplications. He himſelf confeſſes, that *he walks too and fro in the earth, and goes up and down in it*, Job. 1. 7. His buſineſs is to perſwade the Children of Men to the *doing of evil*, to *hinder* the *doing of good*, or to hinder the *good that is done from being well done.* Who is the Man that this bold Enemy will not ſet upon,

upon, ſince he *tempted Chriſt himſelf*, who is God and Man? If he perſwaded our Lord to *worſhip the Devil*, no wonder if he perſwades us not to worſhip God, or to be heartleſs in the worſhip of him. Where is the place in which we may be ſafe and free from his Temptations, ſince he got into Paradiſe it ſelf, and tempted and prevailed over our firſt Parents there? In ſecret Prayer he is ready to diſturb us, he is buſie in the Sanctuary, that Ordinances there may be loſt, and our engaging in them, may be *for the worſe and not for the better*: He ſet upon *Judas* and entred into him, while he was with *Chriſt himſelf at the Table*, Joh. 13. 27. Great reaſon we have to watch and pray againſt this Tempter, and to ſay to him, *The Lord rebuke thee!* Zach. 3. 2.

Can you imagine that when you are about to draw nigh to God, Satan will not draw nigh to you? He will preſent objects, and lay baits for your Senſes, thereby to divert your Minds from the Work of God, and not only will he tempt you *objectively*, but by *injection* too. Though he cannot *look into the Heart*, yet he can *caſt* a great *company of evil thoughts* into it; he makes ſtrange impreſſions upon the Fancy, ſometimes endeavouring to pleaſe it, ſometimes to terrifie and affright it; that either the one or the other way the Mind in Duties may be diſtracted: You had need to be well aware of this ſubtle and ſedulous Enemy, and to look unto your compaſſionate High-Prieſt, who *intercedes for you with the Father*, to *ſuccour you againſt the Tempter*.

When

When Satan would interrupt you with this and the other *trifle*, reply to him, You have to do with the *great God*, about *buſineſs of the greateſt and higheſt conſequence*; and it would ſhew both a *neglect of God*, and a *ſlighting of your own Souls*, to be *diverted*. The Builders of *Jeruſalem*'s Walls, as they wrought in the *Work with the one hand*, ſo in the *other hand they held a Weapon*, Neh. 4. 17. When you are about the Work of God you ſhould have on the *Armour of God*, that you *may ſtand againſt the Devil's wiles*, the *ſhield of Faith*, the *breaſt-plate of Love and Righteonſneſs*, the *Helmet of Hope*, and *the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God*, Satan's force is too weak for ſuch weapons as theſe.

3. A Caution alſo is highly needful *againſt* Mammon *as one of the principal cauſes of Diſtraction*. The Service of *Mammon* juſtles out the Service of God, or ſo diſtracts it that it is juſtly accounted no Service at all. As this World is vain in many other regards, ſo in *this reſpect*, that ſin hinders the *end of it from being attained*. Inſtead of being led up unto God *per ſcalam creaturarum* by the Creatures which he has made, we are by *them drawn away* from *him*, inſtead of admiring God in the Creature, we admire and affect the Creature and forget God. The World being *preſent* and *viſible*, takes the *Senſes* of Men, and their *Fancies*, and to *walk after the ſight of the eye*, is the *way that the heart very well likes*, Eccleſ. 11. 9. And hence it is, that the *inviſible God, and the things which are unſeen*, tho

of

of *eternal excellency and continuance*, are totally diſregarded, or but ſlightly purſued by the moſt of Men.

How are Men ſince the Fall, become *Children in underſtanding*! Meer toys and trifles are of great account with them: *Husks* are coveted, but that which is *indeed Bread*, they have no hunger after, *Iſa.* 55. 2. *Wherefore do ye ſpend your Money for that which is not Bread? and your labour for that which ſatisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your Soul delight it ſelf in fatneſs*: Here is a plain intimation, that *diligent hearkning*, and *ſerious Service* of the Lord, was hindred, by *minding things which could not ſatisfie*. Theſe are things which the *Fleſh purveys for*, that the *Luſts of it* may be *fulfilled*; theſe are the things, that *Satan* puts a *varniſh* upon, that they may be the more *enſnaring and bewitching*; ſo that here lies the great danger leaſt *while God is near in the mouth*, the *World fill the heart*, and *ſteal* it from him.

There are three things in reference to the World, which diſtract thouſands of Hearts, and cauſe millions of Duties to be in vain. The one is *Love to the World*, the other is *care about it*, and another is *Fear concerning it*. Of all theſe you are to beware with the greateſt vigilancy and concernedneſs.

1. Take heed of *Love to the World*. If the World has your Love, it will have your Thoughts at command, and it will not fail to ſhew its power, and to command your thoughts off from God when you attend upon him

him. They that are φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι, *lovers of Pleaſures more than lovers of God*, will think of Pleaſures rather than of God. That Rich Man in the Goſpel, while he was alive, had *Moſes and the Prophets*, as well as his Brethren, he was an *Iſraelite* in Name, called himſelf a *Child of Abraham*, and profeſt himſelf a *Worſhipper of the true God*, but all his worſhip was *heartleſs*, his heart was intoxicated with *ſenſual Delights*, and his *Purple, and fine Linen, and ſumptuous fare*, which every day was provided for him, *Luk.* 16. 19. That which the Soul takes pleaſure in, how will it be revolved in the Mind! Sports and Paſtimes, Garbs and Ornaments, Journies for diverſion and delight, Feaſts, and Mirth and Muſick, if the Heart is fooliſhly fond of ſuch *ſorry things* as theſe; how will they *poſſeſs* the Soul, and that in the *very Houſe of God*, and when his Ordinances are adminiſtred! They will be *preſent* to the *imagination*, though really abſent, and an *imaginary ſatisfaction* will be taken in them, and in the mean while the Lord himſelf will be forgotten, and Communion with him ſlighted.

They that are *greedy* after *gain*, their *hearts* will be *upon their gain*, while their Bodies are before the Lord. Covetouſneſs commands the Thoughts, and extinguiſhes holy Deſires, while the Tongue is ſpeaking heavenly words, the Mind will be projecting and contriving how to get the *Wealth of this World*; as if to be *rich towards God*, were but a poor thing in compariſon. The earthly heart pleaſes it ſelf with

with the Thoughts of *what it has* and with the *Hopes of getting more* of the World, that for the fleſh more abundant proviſion may be made. Oh ſuffer not the World to have your love and friendſhip; if you are friends to the World and over familiar with it, it will have the more *eaſie and ready acceſs* into your hearts at *any time*, and that without the *leaſt check*. Familiar Friends you know, make *bold to come into your door*, without *knocking for admiſſion*.

2. Take heed of *Care about the World*. How do theſe ſolicitous cares about earthly things diſtract and divide the Mind! When the *Kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs ſhould be ſought*, there is a taking thought for *Food* and *Raiment*, and things of that inferiour nature. Our Lord knew the evil of theſe Cares, and therefore uſes a great many words to diſſwade from them. He tells us that our heavenly Father clothes the *Lillies of the Field*, and feeds the *Fowls of the Air*, which have neither *Storehouſe nor Barn*; and much more will he *provide Bread for his Children to eat*, and *Raiment wherewith they may be clothed*; and they are ὀλιγόπιστοι *of little Faith*, that make any doubt of it, *Mat. 6. 30*. If Cares about ſuch things prevail, they may cauſe groſs omiſſions of Duty; or if Duties are done, they may miſcarry in the doing; there may be ſuch an *anxious ſolicitouſneſs* about *this earth*, and the *affairs* of it, that *Heaven* and the *God of Heaven*, may be *hardly thought of*. Worldly care is one of the things that *chokes the Word*, and it will

*choke*

*choke Prayer* alſo, it will hinder the Word from being fruitful, and Prayer from being ſucceſsful. You have leave to *caſt all your care upon God who cares for you*, 1 Pet. 5. 7. And if baniſhing diſtruſt in God, and eagerneſs after the the World, you are careful *for nothing in it*; you may then by *Prayer and Supplication, with thanksgiving make your requeſt known unto God*, Phil. 4. 6. and he *will make it known to you*, that *this* is the very *beſt courſe* you can take for all manner of ſupplies.

3. Take heed of *fear concerning the World*; Our Lord ſays, *why are ye ſo fearful, O ye of little Faith?* There is great reaſon for Faith in God, no reaſon for fear what the World can do to you. Be not diſtracted by *fear* of *worldly loſſes*; thoſe ſhall not befal you, but when God ſees them *beſt* for you, and they ſhall turn to your *trueſt gain*. Be not diſtracted by *fear* of the *Worlds hatred*, and the effects of it; the *Grace* and *Joy* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, can be an *hundredfold better* even at preſent, than any worldly comfort that Man can deprive you of. If an enraged World can keep you off from the Lord's Service, he will have but little from you. *Be not afraid* therefore *of their terrour, neither be troubled*, but *ſanctifie the Lord God in your hearts*, 1 Pet. 3. 14, 15. and he has promiſed to be a *Sanctuary* to you. The fear of the Lyons Den, could not ſcare *Daniel* from the Throne of Grace, but he prayed and gave Thanks as he was wont before his God.

If this preſent World cannot command your love nor care, nor raiſe your fear, you will

will be mightily fortified againſt one very great cauſe of Diſtraction in Religious Services.

4. Another cauſe of Diſtraction, which I muſt caution you againſt, is *Paſſion and Uncharitableneſs.* Paſſion has a ſtrange and mighty force, to transform the whole Soul into *it ſelf*; ſo that if this prevail, not only *Grace* ſhall be under a *dark Eclipſe*; but even *Judgment*, and *Reaſon*, and *common Prudence*, ſhall ſeem to be altogether *baniſhed.* Paſſion *imbitters*, or rather *invenoms* the whole Heart of a Man, diffuſing it ſelf all over, ſo that all is under the power of it. Paſſion has a *monopoly of the thoughts*, and fixes them upon *Injuries received*; nay, though they are but *imaginary injuries*, yet being ſuppoſed *real*, how intent is the Mind upon them! Perhaps *Revenge*, though ſo contrary to the Nature of Chriſtianity, is *wiſh'd for*, and *meditated.* Patience indeed *poſſeſſes the Soul*, but *Paſſion catches* the Soul away, ſo that 'tis poſſeſt no longer; all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, are diſturbed, and moſt diſorderly employed.

Paſſion riſes and lies down with the Paſſionate Man, and is a very bad Companion all the day long; and when *Duties of Religion* come to be performed, there is *ſo much anger in the heart againſt Man*, that *God's anger* is not *feared* nor ſeriouſly deprecated; neither is *his love valued*, or with any earneſtneſs deſired. As the furious Man abounds in tranſgreſſion, ſo his attendance upon God abounds in Diſtractions; and theſe Diſtractions being the *overflowings of wrath, and bitterneſs, and hatred,*

how displeasing and *abominable* must they needs be unto the *God of Love!*

Our Lord presses our *reconciliation to our Brother*, before we *offer our Gifts unto God*, Mat. 5. 24. *Go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* Whilst thou refusest to be reconciled to thy Brother, how canst thou expect that God should be reconciled to thee? Mat. 6. 15. *But if ye forgive not Men their Trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your Trespasses.* As Charity *thinks no evil*, so Uncharitableness *thinks nothing else.* It is *severe* in *censuring*, forward to *judge*, not fearing what is threatned, to be *it self judged*, Mat. 7. 1. It *hopes* and *believes nothing* that is *good*, it *bears* and *endures* nothing that it pronounces to be *bad*, or in the *least injurious* to it.

Nay sometimes in Prayer, instead of the *acting of Grace*, *uncharitableness* will be expressed *before the Lord himself*; there are most *unseemly Complaints*, impious *Imprecations*, and *Desires* vented, that *Divine Wrath* may fall upon those whom the passionate are angry with. But if *they* were so severely punished that offer'd *strange fire* before the Lord, and *fire come forth from the Lord* and *consumed* them; those that offer this *hellish fire* of furious and *revengeful desires*, may well *fear the vengeance of that fire that is eternal.* If you give way to this *sinful anger*, you give *way to the Devil*, and in this Chariot he will *drive furiously* your Hearts away from God, in the Duties you perform: but the more meek and com-

compoſed and ſedate your Souls are, the Holy Ghoſt will the more delight to dwell in them, and to vouchſafe his aſſiſtance to you.

5. Another cauſe of diſtraction is the *prevalency of infidelity*. Faith is a *coming to God by Chriſt Jeſus*; Unbelief is a *rejecting of this Mediatour*, and the *Hearts departing from the Lord*: Take heed of unbelief, as that which ſtrikes at *Religion* in the *very root*, and *blaſts* and *withers* all the *Fruits of it*. Doubt not of the *being of God*, who *gives being* to *all things* that *are*, and who *gave* and upholds *you* in *yours* to this day. Doubt not of his *all-ſeeing Eye*, who *fills Heaven and Earth with his preſence*. Doubt not of his being *ready to be found*; all the *true ſeed of* Jacob, are *witneſſes for God*, that they have ſought his face, and that *they have not ſought him in vain*, Iſa. 45. 19. Doubt not of the *promiſes in the Word*, which thouſands of Saints have *found accompliſhed* unto their *ſtrengthning*, *ſupply*, and *ſatisfaction*: Doubt not of the *Threatnings*, which have ſo *often taken hold of them* who have *boldly ventured* upon the *ſins threatned*; ſo that they have been forced to ſay, *Verily he is a God that judges in the Earth*, and *like as the Lord of Hoſts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, ſo hath he dealt with us*, Zech. 1. 6.

If unbelief has place in you, and the great truths of the Goſpel are queſtioned, or not firmly aſſented to; how can you be *ſerious* in any Religious Service? How diſtracted muſt your thoughts needs be, when you queſtion

whether the Lord has any regard *what you do*, or *how you do it?* This unbelief the great ſpoiler of your Performances, *the Father of Lies* endeavours to promote. He will indeed *inject unbelieving thoughts* into Hearts that have much Faith and Grace But as *Bernard* well ſays, *Latrat ſolum cum ſuggerit, mordet cum ad conſenſum trahit.* Satan does only *bark* when he does *ſuggeſt*, he *bites* when he *gains the Hearts conſent.* Oh never entertain ſuch Injections, never give the leaſt conſent that they ſhould lodge in you. Look upon them as *errant falſhoods*, which an *Enemy* peſters you with, out of a *pernicious deſign*; *firmly believe* the *quite contrary truths*, that that Belief may influence your Spirits, and make you more ſerious when you are before the Lord.

6. The *workings of ſpiritual pride in the heart*, are another cauſe of diſtraction which you are to beware of. It was a good obſervation of *Auguſtine*, that *other iniquity* diſcovers it ſelf in the *doing of evil.*

*Superbia vero bonis operibus inſidiatur, ut pereant.*

*Pride lies in wait as it were about your good Works, to ſpoil the doing of them, that they may be loſt labour.* This ſin ſhews it ſelf ſeveral ways, and upon all occaſions is apt to ſtir, to *puff up and ſwell* the Mind, with *high and touring thoughts* and imaginations. The Phariſee *faſted twice a Week* which implies *Prayer* and *other Exerciſes* of Religion, *Luk.* 18. 12. hereupon he became ſelf-conceited, and *pride* hin-

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dred his *justification*, for he placed his *confidence* in his *own righteousness*. What a dangerous distraction is that, when these *thoughts* are fixed in *thy Heart*, that by *thy Prayers*, and *other Duties* thou *canst make an atonement for thy sins*, which can *indeed* be made *alone* by the *satisfaction and intercession of the Lord Jesus*!

When the Heart is enlarged in Prayer, and good expressions come with great fluency from the Lips; how apt is *he that prays* to have high *Conceits* of himself, and of his Performances? His Mind is prone to wander, and to think what *others think* of him, and is sinfully pleased in the imagination, that they are mightily *pleased* and taken with him; thus Pride draws off *the Soul* from God, to contemplate *its* own *excellent Gifts*, and others *Admiration of them*. Enlargements in *holy Duties* are very encouraging and comfortable, when we are humble under them, when we acknowledge the *Spirits Grace in them*, and though never so much enlarged, despair of *acceptance* but in Christ alone. But when these Enlargements are so advanced and put into *Christ's place*, that we reckon *those* Blessings owing *to enlargements*, which are *the fruit* of Christ's *merit and purchase*; here is distracting Pride which draws off from Christ, and is very displeasing *to the Father*. Such *Thoughts* as these. How well do I pray! How broken for sin do I appear! How *fervent in Spirit* do I seem! What *credit and applause* shall I *get by this* Performance! What a choice and precious *Saint* shall I be *accounted!* Such *Thoughts* are apt to hover

about an enlarged *heart*: but if they are *not kept out* with an *utter deteſtation of them*; the *Heart* will be diſtracted with helliſh Pride, how heavenly ſoever the expreſſions of the *Mouth* are.

And as you are to take heed of the Workings of Pride, ſo of every *other* ſin which does eaſily *beſet* you. If when you are confeſſing any fleſhly or worldly Luſt, it ſtirs in you, and your *Hearts* have ſome regard *to it*, and *delightful Thoughts about it*; this will diſtract your Prayer, and deafen God's Ear. Oh 'tis an ill thing to have the *Heart* reſolve to ſpare *the ſin*, which the *Hypocritical Tongue* does *cry* aloud, that it may be *ſlain*. That ſin which your Conſtitutions, Callings, or the Times in which you live, make you moſt prone to commit: Satan may in a ſpecial manner endeavour to *invigorate*, that it may be a great diſtraction and diſturbance to you in your *attendance* upon God. The Grace of God therefore ſhould make you moſt to *watch againſt* and *hate* that ſin, which Nature did moſt of all *delight* in, and *love*.

7. Another cauſe of diſtraction is, a *zealous affection towards an erroneous way*. Errours are of ſeveral ſorts, ſome are *præter fundamentum*, off from *the Foundation*; others are *circa fundamentum*, about *the Foundation*; a third ſort are *contra fundamentum*, againſt, and raſe the very *Foundation* of Religion; theſe laſt are moſt dangerous. The broachers and ſpreaders of them are called, λύκοι ἅρπαγες, *ravening Wolves* that *ſpare not the Flock*; and truly the pro-

propagators, of leſſer Errors do a great deal of harm, they are called *little Foxes*, and are often very prejudicial eſpecially to *young Converts*, and prove a great hindrance to the good work begun in them: Therefore you read, Cant. 2. 15. *Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes that ſpoil the Vines, for our Vines have tender Grapes.* Errours, how do they *excite the zeal* of the Soul! And though they are but about *ſmaller matters*, yet they ſo command the *Tongue and Thoughts*, that they are more *talk'd of* and *minded*, than *the great things of Law* and *Goſpel.* Erroneous Opinions do ſo poſſeſs *the Heart*, that the *main truths and things of* Religion are *little* regarded, and leſs improved.

They that are very fond of Errour, when they are praying or hearing, or engaged in other Ordinances: Satan dreſſes up that error with a *diſguiſe of truth*, and ſo preſents it to their Minds, and their Minds are drawn away by *the thoughts* of it, and Ordinances are ineffectual and loſt to them. No wonder that zealots for Errour, are called, ἀστέρες πλανῆται, *Jud.* v. 13. *wandring Stars*; they wander from the way of *truth*, and this wandring makes them very much to wander from God in holy Duties, whilſt the eagerneſs of *their Spirits*, is after their miſtakes, in which they are ſo very confident.

Beguiled Souls are called *unſtable*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. the Apoſtle tells us, they are *toſt to and fro, carried about with every wind of Doctrine.* The unſettledneſs of their Judgments, and proneneſs to run from one errour to another, mighP 4 tily

tily distracts their *Thoughts*, and they are *little*, if at all edified by their *Duties*. Errours are very apt to knock at the Door, when you are *attending* upon God; and Satan is very busie *then* to disturb and distract you with *Thoughts* about them. The Lord would be served with *greater intention*, if you did not trouble your Heads with *doubtful Disputations*, which you are caution'd against, *Rom.* 14. 1. and if you did follow that counsel, 2 *Pet.* 3. 17. *Beware lest ye being led away with the errour of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.*

8. The *sloth and lazyness of the Heart, in refusing to take pains with it self to keep close to God*, is another cause of distraction; a cause it is, which most commonly prevails, there is therefore need of caution against it. The *Work* of the Heart *with its own self*, is very *hard Work* indeed, in the doing of *this to purpose*, lies both the *difficulty*, and also the *truth* of Religion. To be wicked and *deceitful*, are the *two bad properties* of the Heart, which are natural to it; the wickedness of the Heart, makes it backward to come to God; the deceitfulness of the Heart makes it very ready to start aside *like a deceitful Bow*, and to fly off from him. Great pains and labour is absolutely necessary to engage the Heart to approach to the Lord, and to abide with him. These accesses to God are against *nature*; like rowing a Boat against a swift Stream, or rolling a Stone up a steep Hill. If the Oar be not plyed, the Stream carries the Boat back: let the Stone but a little alone to it self, and how presently, and

how

how far will it run downward! The Poet observed the strength of Natures inclination.

*Naturam expellas furcâ licet, usque recurret.*

*Use greatest force 'gainst Natures Will,*
*It shall recoyl upon you still.*

There is need of *constant care and industry*, and the *aid* of *supernatural Grace*, else the Heart will never be brought to *acquaint it self with God*, or to *delight in Communion with him*.

Take heed of sloth in holy Duties, and *carelesnes of Spirit*, which makes Men *indifferent and unconcerned* what frame their Hearts are in; as if in these *distractions* there were *no great sin* or *harm*. The Psalmist tells us, *The Lord is in his holy Temple, the Lord's Throne is in Heaven, his Eyes behold, his Eyelids try the Children of Men*, Psal 11. 4. with a *pleased Countenance*, he does *behold the upright Heart*, but he frowns upon all *careless Servants*. Take heed of imagining there is no need of striving again vain *Thoughts* in the Lord's Service. If these are allowed of, know that *God allows not* of them; and if they have place in you, what may they *come to at last?* The *greatest sin that* ever was committed, *began with a Thought*, and if the first Thought had been *utterly banished*, the sinful desire had not been kindled, nor the Deed done

I have spoken of the causes of distraction, with great heed you are all of you to beware

of

of them; for if you give way to *theſe*, they will *corrupt* all your *Duties*. I read in the old Law, that nothing that had a blemiſh was to be offer'd to God in Sacrifice; this ſhews, that *Chriſt the great Sacrifice*, was *without blemiſh and without ſpot*; and 'tis an *intimation*, what our *Duties ought to be*. But if Diſtractions, and the cauſes of *them*, are *not taken heed* of, your Services will be no *better* than a Sacrifice would have been, that had all the *forbidden Blemiſhes*, Lev. 22. 22. *Blind, broken, maimed, with Wens, Scurvy, and Scabbed*; which muſt needs have been very hateful, if it had been offer'd to the Lord.

USE II. By way of *expoſtulation*. I ſhall expoſtulate the matter with you about theſe diſtractions in your Religious Performances.

1. Without diſtraction you can mind your *Secular Affairs*, and why ſhould you not be more intent and ſerious about your *eternal concerns*? What is a ſmall Cypher to the whole *Circle of the Heavens*? What is Time which is ended almoſt as ſoon as begun, to Eternity that will never end at all? Temporal Afflictions are light, and burthens only *for a moment*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. Temporal felicity is but a *pleaſant and ſhort Dream*, and is *chaſed away as a night Viſion*. But eternal Woes and Joys, are *Woes and Joys indeed*; they are perfectly poſſeſſed all at once, altogether; and as to the *Woes*, there can be *no hope* of *any releaſe*; as to the *Joys*, there is no room for *any fear* of *deprivation*.

2. With-

2. Without diſtraction you can *hear or read News*, or a *pleaſant Hiſtory*; and is not a *Religious Duty* of *far greater importance* to you? Shall the pleaſing of the fancy be minded more than the ſecuring of the Soul? Shall the State of Affairs in this World be asked after, and will you not ſeriouſly inquire into your own *Spiritual Eſtate?* and mind what is likely to become of you, when you go into the other World; where you will be fixed in *bleſſedneſs* or *miſery* that will be *unalterable?*

3. Without diſtraction hertofore you *have hearkned to the evil one*, and with great ſtudiouſneſs contrived to commit ſin, and if the worſt Maſter was *thus attended* upon, ſhall not *now* the *beſt much more?* Have you not *deviſed wickedneſs*, and *ſet your ſelves* in an evil way? *Pſal.* 36. 4. and will you not now with as great thoughtfulneſs deviſe how to do good, and with an undiſtracted purpoſe ſet upon the doing of it? The Apoſtle would not only have you to change your Maſter, and *being free from ſin*, become *Servants of Righteouſneſs*, Rom. 6. 18. but *as* you ſerved ſin, *ſo* you ſhould ſerve righteouſneſs; be *as forward, ſerious and diligent in holy Duties*, as *ever you were in the Works of darkneſs.*

4. Without diſtraction you have *thought upon injuries, and meditated revenge*; and ſhall not *reconciliation with God*, and your *own Salvation*, be minded with greater *intention?* Thou think eſt much of the wrongs that others do to thee, think more of the *injury thou haſt done* to *God's Juſtice*, and how thou haſt *ſinn'd againſt*

*againſt thine own Soul*, in provoking his Wrath againſt thee, Jer. 7. 19. *Do they provoke me to anger, ſaith the Lord? Do they not provoke themſelves to the confuſion of their own faces?* Let the *Thoughts*, of the *many many Talents* which *thou oweſt*, ſwallow up the *Thoughts* of the *few Pence* which are owing *thee*.

5. How often, and for how long a *time together*, has meer *Vanity* commanded your *Thoughts* and *Hearts*? And will you *not watch with* your Lord, and in his Work for an hour? Proud *Imaginations*, ſilly *Suppoſitions* of your having that Wiſdom, Wealth, Excellency, and Eſteem, which you have not, have prevailed; and you have *ſet* your ſelves on high in your own fancies. Divers ſorts of Wickedneſſes, how *fixed* have they been in your Speculations! And why ſhould not your *Spirits* be much more fixed upon God, and your *Duty towards* him?

6. Food and Raiment, and providing for your Families are minded in good earneſt, and without diſtraction; and ſhould you not with far greater heedfulneſs ſeek the Kingdom of God and his *Righteouſneſs*? Why ſhould there be ſo much diſtraction in minding the one *thing* needful? If you do not mind *the good part* quickly, you may *miſs of it eternally*; it may ſoon be too late to ſeek it. But if now you *chuſe it*, your Hearts being ſeriouſly ſet upon it, you ſhall have it, and that *good part ſhall never be taken away from you*, Luke 10. 42.

USE

USE III. Shall be of *Direction*, I am to direct you to *proper Remedies* against *distraction in Religious Performances*. The Disease, I grant is difficult to be cured; but with the great Physician, no Distemper is impossible to be healed. Having therefore your Eye and dependance upon him, use these following Remedies.

1. Let your *first Thoughts every Morning be always good ones*. An Heart well seasoned with *these* in the *beginning* of the day, is likely to be in the *better frame* in *holy Duties*, and better inclined all *the day long*. As soon as you are *awake*, let your Souls work *Heaven-ward*, and be *lifted up* to the God that is *there*. Such Souls he is pleased with, and delights to communicate his Grace unto. If the Lord has the *first fruits* of your Hearts, the first thoughts and desires, you are likely to be blest with the *better* thoughts and desires afterwards; as of old the first-fruits being offered to God, his Blessing was upon the whole Harvest. And tho you do take pains with your Hearts in the Morning, remember, at no *time of the day* you must let down your *Watch*, and become *utterly regardless* of your own *Spirits*; for if you are, corruption will quickly, though it has had never so great a Check, return, and that with great force and violence. Thus when *the Sea fled, and* Jordan *was driven back*, within a little while they both returned to their former Course and Channel.

When

When *I awake*, says the Psalmist, *I am still with thee*, Psal. 139 18. He saw himself *under God's special care*, and *compassed with his favour as with a Shield*; and *God's Thoughts about him* so full of tender mercy and loving kindness, and amounting to so vast a Sum, were very precious and delightful to him to think of. And how whenever he awaked, did his Heart work towards the Lord, in a way of gratitude and love! Begin the Day well, and all the Day long keep your Hearts with all keeping. If you would not have your *Thoughts vain in Duty*, let them not be allowed to be *vain at any time*. In the *space of time between* your solemn Duties, be frequent in *holy Ejaculations*, and *mental Applications* unto God, this will mightily help to keep a sense of him upon your Hearts, and the more undistracted will your Service be, when at your *set times* every day you attend upon him.

2. Be sensible that *the preparation of the heart in Man is from the Lord*, Prov. 16. 1. Look unto him therefore to prepare *your Hearts* for every Duty you engage in. Cries for *preparation* should be the first Cries, and Cries afterwards are likely to be to *better* purpose. Preparation for Duty goes before profit by it; and when the Lord vouchsafes to prepare, he intends to bestow *benefits*. His *preparation* causes Prayer to be so *seriously and fervently made*, as that it shall in no wise meet with a denial, *Psal.* 10. 17. *Thou wilt prepare their Heart, thou wilt cause thy Ear to hear*. In this preparation, the *Spirit* of the Lord affords a

mighty

mighty help; there is a liberty and freedom to the Duty that is to be performed; and the more free the *Heart* is to the *Duty*, the more free and enlarged 'tis likely to be *in the Duty*. Clogs and weights are removed; and among theſe clogs, diſtraction and deadneſs may well be reckoned.

* The prepared *Heart* by the *Spirit* and *Grace* of Chriſt, is *diſentangled from the World*, ſtands aloof from it, that it may draw the nearer to God. It is made to ſee how worthy ſin is of its moſt *bitter Sorrow*, and *utter deteſtation*, and with an holy *indignation*, it ſays, *What have I to do any more with any of my iniquities?* The prepared Heart prizes the Bleſſings 'tis about to *petition* for, and *longs to appear before God*, from whom alone they can be obtained. 'Tis delivered from the *vain and injudicious Spirit of this World*, and by the *Spirit* which is of God, *knows the worth of thoſe things which are ſo freely given of God.* And this preparedneſs of Heart, muſt needs be a great preſervative againſt diſtraction.

* *The prepared heart is a fully reſolved heart, and an holy and firm reſolution made in a ſtrength beyond our own, will mightily help to baniſh diſtraction.*

3. Pray for the *fulfilling of that Promiſe*, wherein the Lord has engaged *to give you an heart to know him.* They that are ignorant of God, muſt needs be ignorant alſo how to *attend* upon him. If their knowledge be only *notional*, and they *know him not as they ought to know him*, they will not *attend* upon him, as *they ought to attend upon him.* Lay hold there-

fore

fore upon *that* good Word of Promiſe, *Jer.* 24. 7. *And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they ſhall be my People, and I will be their God, for they ſhall return to me with their whole heart.* And Heb. 8. 11. *They ſhall all know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt.* This knowledge of God will have a *mighty* influence upon your *Hearts*, to bring *your very Thoughts into captivity and obedience*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. We read, 1 *Sam.* 2. 3. That *the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed*, and *they* who *rightly* know *this*, will take care to *ſerve him in ſincerity.*

True knowledge of God will bring a *great awe* of him upon your Spirits. His *Majeſty, Glory, Holineſs*, will ſtrike you *into great humility and reverence.* How will you be emptied of your ſelves, and your *Souls and Thoughts ſwallowed* up in God, when he does cauſe his *Excellency* to paſs before you! The appearance of the Lord obſcures and darkens all things elſe, that they are *counted* not worth minding. Therefore the Prophet ſays, Iſa. 24. 23. *Then the Moon ſhall be confounded, and the Sun aſhamed, when the Lord of Hoſts ſhall reign in* Mount Zion *and in* Jeruſalem, *and before his Ancients gloriouſly.* The Eye of this God whom you *attend* upon, is *jealous*; and yet withal it is all ſeeing. Oh take heed of being deceived, as if *God* would be mocked by *Man*, and Man not be *the worſe*, nor *ſmart for it.* Gal. 6. 7. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* If thy Duties are only like a ſowing of meer Chaff, how canſt thou expect

expect to reap any good by them? The *good Angels* themselves do reverence *the Lord*, whom you are worshipping; the *Apostate ones tremble* before him; the *better* you know him, the more godly your fear will be, and fear will *unite your Hearts* and *Thoughts both to God*, and to the Work and Duty he requires.

4. Be very *careful to cherish the Grace of Hope in your Hearts*, and look upon *holy Duties as highly valuable Priviledges*: the greater your expectation is of the truest benefit and advantage, the more intent and fixed will your *Thoughts* be. The Apostle prays to the *God of hope*; for the believing *Romans*, *that they might abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost*. Rom. 15. 13. Hope has an *earnest expectation*, and the *better* the things are, which are hoped for, still the more earnest the *expectation* is; this the Apostle calls, ἀποκαραδοκία; an emphatical word, and signifies to look for a thing with an Head *lifted up*, and with great *intention* both of Eyes and Mind. Such an Hope what a remedy would it be against Distraction! When Hope is very low, the Mind runs very much upon *matter of discouragement*, and is deadned by it. And the best things of all being almost despaired of, the Heart is the apter to wander after *things that cannot profit*; but Hope is compared to an Anchor, Heb. 6. 19. *Which hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast*, it keeps the Soul steddy and fixed upon what is hoped for, till it be enjoyed.

Duties are not only to be engaged in, as what are due to God, but we are to be per-

ſwaded, that the giving what is due to God, is the way to *receive ſtill more and more from him.* In theſe Duties, our Hopes ſhould be high in him that is moſt high, we are not able to conceive how much he can do for us. We are to hope in him as a moſt liberal and all-ſufficient Giver; we are to expect the yearning of his Bowels in our Diſtreſſes and Afflictions, and eſpecially when we are weary and heavy laden with the *burthen* of our *Iniquities.* We are to expect the unlocking of the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt, which are enough to enrich the whole beggar'd progeny of *Adam*; and all that come to him ſhall certainly experience the Riches and fulneſs of that Grace that dwells in him. The Ploughman plows in hope, and hope fixes his *Thoughts* upon the precious *Fruits of the Earth*, which in Harveſt he expects to reap. Oh ſtudy the Promiſes of God, which are exceeding broad; they are wider than the Earth and Sea, and they reach as high as the higheſt Heaven. Hope for the promiſed Bleſſings which are of all ſorts *Temporal*, *Spiritual*, *Eternal*; and the more ſtrong and lively hope is, it will the more fix your Mind, revive your Spirits, and quicken your Deſires.

5. Another Remedy againſt Diſtraction, is a *fervent Love.* As love is the firſt and great Command, ſo 'tis a moſt commanding affection: *Amor meus pondus meum.* Love is the *weight* which *ſets all the Wheels a going*, and inclines them *that way* which it *ſelf is inclined.* The Soul of Man has been by ſome affirmed to

be

be *ubi amat, non ubi animat*, where *it loves*, and on the object beloved, rather than in the Body, which is the Tabernacle where it dwells; and the reaſon is, becauſe Love does ſo command the Mind and *Thoughts after it.* If your love be ſet upon God, *Love* will ſet *your Thoughts* upon him. The *Thoughts* of the Covetous, how are they intent upon their beloved gain! and the Pleaſures which the voluptuous doat on, are hardly ever out of their Mind! If *love to God* conſtrain you *to attend* upon God, it will bring your *Thoughts along with it*, and very much reſtrain *them* from wandring.

The Love of God can never be produced by corrupt Nature, nor by the meer force of reaſon, 'tis a *ſpecial Grace of the Lord's Spirit*, and to *him* you muſt make application for it. Chriſt died that he might bring you to God, and Love is the going of the Soul to him. In the Name of Chriſt put up your earneſt *Petitions, that this Grace* of Love may be wrought in you in truth; and being wrought, that it may continually be increaſed. The Lord ſays, he will write his Laws in your Hearts; Oh pray that this great Command to love him, may be written in deep and laſting Characters; and if the Lord once become your deſire and delight: the Duties you perform, will become more pleaſant and delightful and undiſtracted. God is *light*, and in him there is no darkneſs, nothing but what is deſirable. All Excellencies in the Creatures are derived from him, and the Streams are but little if we look to the Fountain from whence they all come. This

God, as *excellent and glorious* as he is, is *willing in Chriſt* to be *yours*: Such *lovelineſs!* Such *loving-kindneſs*; what *Love* does it call for from you! Let nothing be able to draw away your *Love*, and the leſs will *your Thoughts* be drawn away from him.

6. Be *very poor in Spirit*: A preſſing ſenſe of your ſpiritual Neceſſities, will make you very intent and ſerious in begging Supplies from above, for 'tis from thence alone you can be ſupplied. They that are pinched with Poverty, how *much do they think* how *poor they are!* They have ſuch a ſmart feeling of their Needs, they *can ſcarce think* of *any thing beſides*. The *condemned Malefactor*, when he cries for a *Pardon*, and has hopes to ſpeed, ſurely the apprehenſion of his danger, makes his *Words* and his *Thoughts* to *go together*. When the Man *almoſt famiſhed* asks for *Bread*, no doubt his *Mind is very much upon that Bread* which may prevent his ſtarving. Be you but *ſenſible* how *great the Needs* of your *Souls* are, and that 'tis the *Father of Spirits only*, who can give you the *mercy and grace* which you need; and the more of ſenſe you have, the leſs diſtracted will you be in your Applications to him.

Our Lord pronounces *the poor in Spirit bleſſed*, Mat. 5. 3. their *Petitions* come from an *inward ſenſe* of their *want*, and of the *worth* of Bleſſings, and being earneſt Petitioners, they ſhall be ſucceſsful ones. You that feel your guilt, and fear Divine Wrath, muſt needs *think of a Pardon*, and the *deſirableneſs of it*, when you *aſk for it*. You that are *ſenſible* of your

your *Maladies*, how *intent* will your Minds be upon the *Lord the healer of his People!* And you will have *little liſt to think of ſomething elſe*, when you are begging to be cured! True *poverty of Spirit* will conſtrain to an undiſtracted ſeeking of that *Gold tried in the fire to enrich you*, and that *white Raiment to cover you*, Rev. 3. 18. without which you muſt needs be *wretched and miſerable*, becauſe you will be *poor and naked.*

7. Let *Conſcience be very tender, vigilant and faithful.* Such a Conſcience will be very helpful to prevent diſtraction, or quickly to put an end to it. It will *obſerve*, and fetch home the Truant, and ſtraying Thoughts, and bring them to your Duties. * Conſcience acts in *God's Name*, by his *Authority*, and urges Obedience to his Laws, and much inſiſts, if it be truly enlightned and faithful, upon the right manner of obeying. Conſcience takes ſtrict notice of the *whole Soul* and all the actings of it; and this *Officer of God*, eſpecially does this, in the Souls approaches to the Lord; a ſenſe of being *under God's Eye*, makes the faithful Conſciences Eye *more ſtrict and ready to ſpy all faults*, that they may preſently be amended. In holy Duties, ſuch a Conſcience will be very buſie, it will *earneſtly proteſt* againſt *vain and diſtracting Thoughts*; and it will ſay, *What make ſuch thoughts here,*

* *I diſtinguiſh between a tender Conſcience and a ſcrupulous one, for a ſcrupulous Conſcience is a great cauſe of diſtraction; for Scruples are moſt apt to run in and peſter the Mind when holy Duties are performing.*

*when God and his Work ought only to be minded?* The presence of *evil* when *good is doing*, such a *Conscience cannot brook* with *Patience*, it stirs up the lustings of the Spirit, against *those* of the Flesh, that the Law of the Mind may prevail more against the Law in the Members, *Rom.* 7. 23.

If Conscience is asleep in your Performances, how *sorry* and *sinful* will they be! The Heart will be dead, the Thoughts will be gone far away, no holy Affections will be stirring. Pray hard for a *good Conscience*, a *Conscience* not only *purged by the Blood of Christ from all the guilt* which by *dead Works* you have contracted, but also by the same *Blood* healed of its Sleepiness, Stupidity, and all other faults of it.

And that Conscience may more effectually check your Hearts from roving, and trifling in attendance upon God, look before you with the *Eye of strong and steddy Faith*, and see as far as Death and Judgment, and into Eternity; and then do you judge, whether for your carelessly performed Duties, your Lord will say, *Well done true and faithful Servants!* The Apostle having lookt as far as his own, and also the World's last Day, wherein *the Heaven shall pass away with a great noise, the Elements melt with fervent heat, and the Earth and the Works therein shall be burnt up*, rationally infers, that Christians Conversations should be very well ordered, Duties of Godliness most undistractedly and seriously performed. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what*

*what manner of Persons ought ye to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness!* 2 Pet. 3. 10, 11.

8. Another Remedy against Distraction, *is growing in Grace, and in the knowledge of Christ*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. This will keep you from being led away by errour, and will make you more stedfast in Duty, as well as Truth. When Grace shall be perfected in Glory, distraction will be perfectly cured: and here on Earth the Cure is advanced, as Grace is augmented. The more Grace you have, you will set the higher value upon Communion with God; and this will fill your Hearts with holy Zeal and Indignation against every thing that may divert your Minds, and be an obstruction to this Communion. The more Grace you have, the more you are filled with the Spirit; and when you pray in the *Holy Ghost*, your Prayer will be δέησις ἐνεργουμένη, *in-wrought Prayer*, Jam. 5. 16. How *much of the Heart and Soul* will be therein! And the same Spirit in hearing, and other Ordinances, will keep your Hearts with God, *when they are about to turn to the right hand or to the left*. Isa. 30. 21. The more Grace you have, the more your *Treasure will be in Heaven*; and you are told, Mat. 6. 21. *Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also.*

Now that there may be an increase of Grace, *Christ must be better known*, for 'tis from him that the first Grace is derived, and all additional degrees of it. Study him more, and understand his *fulness*, who *fills all in all*, Eph. 1. 23. Desire with the Apostle, that *you*

*may know him, and the power of his Reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his Sufferings, being made conformable to his Death*, Pſal. 3. 10. If you conform to the Death of Chriſt, and are *crucified and dead to the World*, and the *World to you*, the things of the World will appear without form and comelineſs, and will be leſs able to *diſtract your Minds*, and *enſnare your Affections*. And if you feel the Power of Chriſt's Reſurrection, your *Hearts and Thoughts will riſe with him*, and at what a rate will *you ſeek thoſe things that are above!* The Angels when here on Earth, they are doing what God commands them, and are in Heaven ſtill as to their Thoughts, and as to the Happineſs they enjoy. You ſhould be heavenly when about your earthly buſineſs, but eſpecially when you are attending upon the God of Heaven. And the more experimentally you underſtand Chriſt riſen, the leſs will things on Earth be minded, and the higher will your Hearts riſe and aſcend after him.

9. Ever *commit the keeping of your Souls to God himſelf in well-doing*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. Apprehending how liable you are to diſtraction in his Service, intreat that he would undertake for you. He that *ſpans the Heavens*, and in his Hand does *hold the Winds*, ſo that they ſtir not in the leaſt againſt his Will, certainly is able to keep your Hearts undiſtracted in your Duties, and cloſe to himſelf. The Lord makes and ſearches, and new makes and fixes the Heart of Man; and none of this is to be done by any power leſs than his. When *David's*

*Soul*

*Soul followed hard after God*, he acknowledged it was the Lord's own *right hand which upheld him*, Pſal. 63. 8. Call in help from Heaven againſt diſtraction, if you would be helpt effectually. The Chriſtian, not only when he is leaving the World, but when *he is engaging in any Religious Duty*, ſhould ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. 31. 5. *Into thy Hands, O Lord, I commit my Spirit.* He, and *he alone* can keep it in a ſerious and compoſed frame.

USE IV. Shall be of Counſel as to *ſome particular Duties*, which I ſhall inſiſt on, and ſhew you how they may with *leſs diſtraction*, be performed. And there are four Duties which at preſent I ſhall ſpeak of.

The firſt is, *Reading the Holy Scriptures.*
The ſecond is, *Hearing the Word Preached.*
The third is, *The Duty of Prayer.*
The fourth is, *Communicating at the Lord's Table.*
Of theſe in order.

I begin with *Reading the Holy Scriptures*, and that theſe may be read with leſs diſtraction.

1. Be firmly *perſwaded of the Scriptures Divine Authority and Verity.* When you take the Bible to look into it, remember 'tis a *Book of God's own making* you have in your hands. The Writers of it were but his Penmen, they wrote not their own, but God's Mind and Will, and were *moved and inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt*:

*Ghost*: To be distracted and regardless of what you read, is to contemn God in disregarding his Word. Mind what you read, for the Scripture *can make you wise to Salvation*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. You may securely trust to his Word, its light is infallible, 'tis certain in its Promises and Threatnings, 'twill by all be found true to eternity. The *word of the Lord endures for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 25.

2. Believe the *Scriptures perfection and sufficiency*, as a means most full and plain to guide you to everlasting blessedness. Here you are faithfully warned to flee from the Wrath to come, and from sin which does deserve it, and here you may find God's Counsel, by which you may be *guided safe to Glory*, Psal. 73. 24. You need not be distracted and doubtful in your own Minds, as if in the Scriptures God's Mind was declared only in part. Man's additions are needless, nay impious, Prov. 30. 6. *Add thou not unto his Words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a Liar*; and Mens Traditions are vain. Heed the Word of God, as that which *enlightens the Eyes, converts the Soul, rejoyces the Heart*; as that which is *profitable for Doctrine, Reproof, for Correction, instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works*, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

3. Look upon the Scriptures as *much directed to you in particular*, and laying an *obligation upon you*, as *if they had dropt from God out of Heaven into your hand*. The word forbids sin in you, as well as in any other in the World; the

the Commands of it reach you, as truly as if you had heard the Lord calling to you by Name, to yield Obedience. The offers of the Goſpel are really made to you, and upon acceptance; the Bleſſings offered are your own: if they are refuſed, how can you eſcape the Wrath of him, *who from Heaven ſpeaks to you* for your good? Heb. 12. 25. That ſuch a particular application ſhould be made, is ſignified by *Solomon*, whoſe word is as a *Goad* and a *Nail* faſtned, to *ſtir* you up to your Duty, and to *ſettle* you in it, Prov. 22. 19, 20. *That thy truſt may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even* unto thee. *Have I not written to thee excellent things in counſels and knowledge?*

4. See the *Lord himſelf juſt by you when you read his Word*; and hear him bidding you take heed how you read. As he has magnified his Word above all his Name, ſo he requires a ſpecial regard ſhould be had to it. He looks with approbation and pleaſure upon that Man who *trembles at his Word*, Iſa. 66. 2. but when he perceives inſtruction to be hated, and that his Law is caſt behind the Back, he admoniſhes ſuch forgetters of God to conſider what this neglect will coſt them, if not repented of, and he threatens to *tear them in pieces, ſo as that there ſhall be none to deliver*, Pſal. 50. 17. 22.

5. Lift up your Eyes to Heaven for *inſtruction from the Spirit*, by *whoſe inſpiration the Scripture was given.* 'Tis the Spirit of Chriſt who *opens Mens Underſtandings to underſtand the*

*the Scriptures*, Luke 24. 45. Be humbly ſenſible of your ignorance, and proneneſs to error and miſtake: A promiſe is made to the humble and meek, that God will guide them in Judgment; ſo that they ſhall judge aright of things, and *he will teach them his way*, Pſal. 25. 9. Cry to the Lord to make you mind what you read, and to profit by what you mind. Deſire Scripture knowledge, that what you know, may have a deep impreſſion upon your Spirits, may excite holy and gracious Affections and Reſolutions in your Hearts, and be mightily effectual unto the more thorow amending of your ways and doings.

6. In *all your ways ſeek for light* from the holy Scriptures, that every ſtep you take may be rightly ordered. Go not in any way, which the word of truth calls a falſe way. How well and wiſely does he walk, that can ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Thy Word is a Lamp to my Feet, and a light unto my Path!* Pſal. 119. 105. *When you go, let this Word lead you*, and then when you ſleep there is a promiſe to keep *you*, and *when you awake it will talk with you*, and be telling you what you muſt *avoid*, *believe* and *do*, that you may be bleſſed for ever. *The Commandment is a Lamp, and the Law is light, and the reproofs of inſtruction are the way of Life*, Prov. 6. 22, 23.

And as the Word talks to you, ſo you ſhould *talk of the word you read*; it will fix it in *your* Thoughts and Hearts the better, and make your Diſcourſe *more edifying to others*, Deut. 6. 6, 7. *And theſe words which I command thee*

*thee this Day, ſhall be in thy heart; and thou ſhalt diligently teach them to thy Children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thy Houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up.* The more the word is written in your Hearts, the more Grace is there; and the more thou talkeſt of it unto them thou converſeſt with, the more it will adminiſter Grace to the Hearers.

The ſecond Duty is *hearing the Word preached*: And that you may hear the word with leſs diſtraction:

1. Look *beyond Preachers* unto *that God who ſends them*, and ſpeaks to you by them. Look beyond the *earthen Veſſels*, unto the Treaſure which they bring; and upon the Word that is preached, as *the glorious Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Image of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 4, 7. Preachers of the Goſpel are Chriſt's Ambaſſadors, and they are ſent to treat with you about Peace with God, and by them God beſeeches you to be reconciled, 2 Cor. 5. 20. *How beautiful* ſhould you count *the Feet of them who preach the Goſpel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* Rom. 10. 15. Such Tidings are too good, diſtractedly and heedleſly to be heard: And he that ſends them is too great to be thus contemned. When you ſit before the Miniſters of Chriſt, and the Stewards of the Myſteries of God, remember what our Lord himſelf ſays, Luke 10. 16. *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth*

*ſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.*

2. Apprehend *who are ready* if you hear *diſtractedly* and *without care*, to *catch away the Word from you as ſoon as 'tis ſpoken.* Evil Angels are compared to the *Fowls of the Air*, who hover about the Sower, to devour the Seed as ſoon as it is ſown, Luk. 8. 5. Theſe evil Spirits are fitly compared to Fowls, for they are many; and how do they come flocking into our Religious Aſſemblies! 'Tis deſirable, to have *Souls come flying to Chriſt, as Doves to their Windows*; but it may ſtartle us to underſtand that *Devils came flocking into Churches*, to *catch away the Word* which is preached there! Theſe Enemies as they are many, ſo as Fowls they are above us; and conſequently *not ſo eaſie is it to reſiſt them!* How many Sermons have theſe evil Angels ſtolen! And the Sermons they have ſtolen, they have them to ſhew againſt heedleſs Hearers at the Day of reckoning.

3. Make a *Covenant with your Eyes*, that your hearing may be the leſs diſtracted and more attentive. Fix not your ſight upon any alluring and enſnaring Objects, or any thing which may divert you. And as your Eyes muſt be turned away from *beholding Vanity*, that you may be quickned in the way of your Duty, ſo be ſure to keep your Eyes *waking*. If ſleep locks up the Senſes, how faſt muſt the Heart the mean time be barr'd againſt the Word of God! *Eutichus* a Church Sleeper, is an Example upon Record, *ſinking down with*

*with sleep* while *Paul* was preaching, he *fell down* and *was taken up dead*, Act. 20. 9. They that sleep at a Sermon, scandalously reject and despise the word preached: Satan is a most wakeful Witness against them, and his Arms are the Cradle in which they are *rockt*.

4. Beg that the *Lord himself would open your Hearts to attend to his Word*. It was he who opened the *Heart of* Lydia, and then she *attended to those things which were spoken by* Paul, *Acts* 16. 14. 'Tis the Lord that makes way for the Word into the Mind, that it may be heeded and understood; and he makes way for the Word into the Heart, that the Heart may be changed and cleansed thereby, *Joh.* 15. 3. *Now are ye clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.* 'Tis dreadful to provoke the Lord, so as to be like unto provoking *Israel*; to whom *Moses* speaks thus, Deut. 29. 4. *The Lord hath not given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear unto this Day.* And it will be worse if you love to have it thus still. O think thus, that distracted hearing may cause the word of Life to become deadly to you; and God may judicially and yet justly harden your Hearts, lest you should *see, and hear, and understand, and convert and be healed*, Isa. 6. 10.

5. Let the word preached be *mixt with Faith, and received with Love*. The Apostle tells us, that the *Word preached did not profit* the hearers of it, *not being mix'd with Faith in them that hear'd it*, Heb. 4. 2. Commands will be heeded and obeyed, that are indeed believed

to

to be of God. Threatnings and Promiſes that are moſt firmly credited, cannot but be minded, and have a mighty influence. The Word alſo is to be received in the Love of it, that *you may* be ſaved. The deſign of this Word is *your* deliverance from *ſin and miſery, your Peace, your Purity and Perfection, your eternal Redemption and Glory*; and therefore it commends it ſelf exceedingly to *your* Affections: A ſincere love to the Word, will command the Thoughts of the Heart, and hinder the Word from being diſregarded.

6. Remember that *the Word which you hear, is your Life.* There is a careleſneſs of life, in heedleſneſs and diſtraction in hearing the Word of God, Deut. 32. 46, 47. *Set your hearts unto all the Words which I teſtifie among you this Day; for it is not a vain thing for you, for it is your Life,* Prov. 7. 2. *Keep my Commandments and live, and my Law as the Apple of your Eye,* Iſa. 55. 3. *Incline your Ear, come unto me, hear, and your Soul ſhall live; and I will make with you an everlaſting Covenant, even the ſure Mercies of* David.

And further, to fix *your* attention to the Word preached, be all of *you* perſwaded, that *you* who are now in the *Sanctuary*, muſt ſhortly *ſtand at the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt*, and *the Word which he has ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge you at the laſt day*, Joh. 12. 48. Then *you* muſt render an account of *your* Stewardſhip, and how all *your* Talents have been improved, and *you* muſt be judged, and receive according to *your* Works. And ſure I am, that the Sentence

Sentence which will then be pronounced, whether it be of Abſolution, *Come ye Bleſſed*, or of Condemnation, *Go ye Curſed*; cannot but be heard without diſtraction. Both the one and the other of theſe Sentences muſt needs be heeded by all upon whom they are paſſed; the one being ſo *very* comfortable, and the other ſo terrible and confounding.

A third Duty which I ſhall inſiſt on, is *Prayer*; now that you may with leſs diſtraction call upon the Name of God.

1. Conſider *whoſe Name it is* you are taking into your Mouths, Deut. 28. 58. *That glorious, and fearful Name,* THE LORD THY GOD. A Name which ſhould never be in the Lips, without the profoundeſt Reverence in the Heart. *The Gods that made not the Heavens and the Earth, ſhall periſh from the Earth, and from under theſe Heavens* But *the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlaſting King; at his Wrath the Earth doth tremble, and the Nations ſhall not be able to abide his indignation,* Jer. 10. 10, 11. This God whom you pray to, is infinitely more above you, than the greateſt Emperour is above the meaneſt Worms that crawl upon the ground! How ſhould you look to the frame of your Spirits when you are before him! The Paſſion of fear calls in the Blood to the Heart, that the Vitals may be fortified; and truly the Grace of fear will call in the Thoughts of the Heart, that Duties performed to ſo great a Majeſty, may not be an heedleſs trifling with him.

2. Sequester *your selves from other business to intend Prayer*; the more you are disentangled from your Secular Affairs, the more free and fit your Hearts will be to be poured out before the Lord in your *supplications*. The further you step out and off from the World, when you come to knock at Heaven Gates, the more certainly will the Door be opened to you. If *Mammon* has your Thoughts and Desires, when you are praying to God, you have a jealousie-provoking Idol in your Hearts, while in his Presence; and how offensive must this needs be to him, to see an Idol there, where he chuses to dwell! *One thing*, says the Psalmist, *have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after*, Psal. 27. 4. Other things were esteemed worthless comparatively. Let not other matters distract you when you are calling upon God, that you may pray in Prayer, and do nothing else but pray. Remember, distracted *Confessions* increase Guilt and Wrath; distracted *Petitions* ask for a denial, and distracted *Praises* will tend very much unto the stopping of the Current of Mercies.

3. Be perswaded that the Lord *will attentively mind what you pray, if you intently mind what you pray for your selves*. He takes pleasure in uprightness, and this Heart-searcher well knows who are sincere; and not so much as a Sigh or Groan from a sincere Soul, shall be disregarded. If you from your Heart cry for Mercy, *Mercy shall compass you about*, Psal. 32. 10. The Prophet tells us, *That the Lord*

*Lord hearkned and heard*, Jer. 8. 6. Indeed *moſt ſpeak not aright*, they *repent not of their wickedneſs, ſaying, what have we done?* But thoſe who do ſpeak aright, and being truly ſenſible of the evil of their doings, fervently pray to have their ſins covered, and all their defilements purged away: The Lord who hearkens ſo attentively, will ſurely hear all ſuch Cries, and in no wiſe deny what is cryed for. Believe the mighty efficacy of fervent Prayer, and what rich returns this Trading to Heaven brings in, and what Treaſures Prayer is a Key to unlock, that you may be enriched thereby! A ſacred coveting theſe unſearchable Riches, will make you mind what you are doing when you are praying to partake of them; and the Apoſtle tells you, for your encouragement, Rom. 10. 12. *There is no difference between the* Jew *and the* Greek; *for the ſame Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him.*

4. Cry earneſtly for *the holy Spirit of Promiſe*: You will never pray aright, or to any purpoſe, without his aid. The Holy Ghoſt is called the Spirit of Grace, becauſe all true Grace is from him, and ſo are all gracious deſires and actings. He is alſo called the Spirit of Supplication, all acceptable Confeſſions, Petitions, and Thankſgivings, are of his enditing. And this Spirit is promiſed; and how ready is our heavenly Father to give the Spirit to any that ask him! Now we read that *he which ſearcheth the heart, knoweth what is the Mind of the Spirit, for he maketh interceſſion for*

*the Saints, according to the Will of God,* Rom. 8. 27. Saints Prayers, are called the Mind of the Spirit; he makes them to be *according to the Will of God*; and that not only as to the matter of them, but also as to the manner: The Spirit of God at first *moved upon the face of the Waters*; and how many useful Creatures did he produce out of a Chaos of Confusion! And if that Spirit move upon your Hearts in Prayer, he can keep your Thoughts that they stir not from God, and cause Faith, and godly Sorrow and Hope, Humility and Love, to be in actual exercise; and the more Grace is exercised: Prayer will be the less distracted and more successful.

5. Let *Vigilancy and watching go before, keep pace with Prayer, and follow after it.* Why has a Christian new Eyes and Light, but that he might watch with the one, and by the other? Our Lord joyned watching and praying together; Prayer without watching will be heartless, watching without Prayer, will be insufficient for your security. Watching with Prayer makes it more serious, and to succeed the better. The Apostle says, *The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober and watch unto Prayer,* 1 Pet. 4. 7. Watching *unto* Prayer, summons the whole Soul with all its Faculties to attend upon God, and to prepare to meet him. We also read, *Col.* 4. 2. *Continue in Prayer, and watch in the same with Thanksgiving.* Watching *in* Prayer, is a mighty help against the Heart's straggling: This straggling is the sooner observed, and the

the ſtraggling Thoughts preſently reduced. And he that watches *after* Prayer, diligently and with all thankfulneſs obſerves the Anſwers of Prayer. And thus to do, will ſtrongly induce you to give your ſelves more to Prayer in good earneſt, and to wreſtle with him, with whom you do ſo often prevail.

The fourth and laſt Duty I ſhall mention, is *Communicating at the Lord's Table*; and that this may be done with leſs diſtraction.

1. Let there be *more ſerious ſelf-examination before you engage in that holy Ordinance.* 1 Cor. 11. 28. *But let a Man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* Look into the State of your Souls, and your State is good, if you know the true God ſo as to love him and prefer him in your choice before all things beſides; and if you know Chriſt, ſo as to rely upon him, with conſent to be ruled by him, as your Lord and Saviour, Joh. 17. 3. *This is life eternal thus to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he has ſent.*

Take great notice alſo of the preſent frame of your Hearts, that you may know in what Graces they are weakeſt, and what kind of Luſtings of the Fleſh are apteſt to prevail; and what things they are which are moſt likely to diſtract your Minds, and draw away your

*Remember that Chriſt himſelf is really preſent at his Table; and his Eye, which is as a flame of fire, obſerves the frame of every heart. Fix your* Eye *upon your own Hearts, ſince Chriſt's Eye is upon them.*

Hearts, when at the Table; your watch hereupon will be the ſtricter, and your thoughts will run the more upon the particular Graces that are to be ſtrengthened, and upon the ſins too, which are to be ſtruck more dead by the power of the Death and Crucifixion of Chriſt Jeſus.

2. Let the *Death of Chriſt*, put you in mind what you were and would have been ſtill, if he had not died for you, you would have been dead in Law, under the damnatory Sentence of it; and you would have been dead in Treſpaſſes, dead to God, and to any thing that is truly good; employed in nothing but dead works, and thereby fitted to deſtruction. And how ſhould your Thoughts be ſeized on by the obligation your Lord has laid you under, in freeing you from Death and eternal Deſtruction, by *laying down his own Life a ranſom for you!* Mat. 20. 28.

When the Apoſtle ſaid *he determined not to know any thing ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified*, 1 Cor. 2. 2. it ſhews upon whom his Thoughts were. Our Thoughts at the Lord's Table ſhould be faſtned to Chriſt as he was to the Croſs. We ſhould behold, admire, and be ſuitably affected when we behold him that is equal with God, in the form of a Servant, in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, and humbling himſelf ſo low, as to *become obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs*, Phil. 2. 8. Let the worth of the Perſon ſuffering the Merit of the Sufferings themſelves, and the value of the Benefits thereby procured, be believed; and

how

how can they chuſe but be heedfully thought of!

3. Take due notice, that *Chriſt when he was dying*, gave *this charge* to his Diſciples, that they ſhould engage in this *Ordinance* as a *Memorial* of him. *Chriſt's Death* was *infinitely more*, than if *all Creatures* that have Life, had loſt their Lives to make an atonement. Juſt when he was ready to make his Soul an Offering for ſin, he bids us *to do this in remembrance of him*, 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24. *The Lord Jeſus the ſame Night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks he brake it, and ſaid, Take eat, this is my Body which is broken for you, do this in remembrance of me.* The command of ſuch a Lord, that Lord dying, and dying ſuch a meritorious Death, and in that Death expreſſing Love which paſſes Knowledge; and the Command given on purpoſe, that he might ſtill be and live in our remembrance, if well weighed, will make us mind what we are doing, and prevent diſtraction.

4. The *Sacramental Elements and Actions* being underſtood, with their ſignification, will be a great means to fix the Thoughts of the Communicants. When your Eyes behold the Bread, let your Faith behold the Body of Chriſt. When you ſee the Bread broken, believe that Chriſt was wounded and bruiſed for your Iniquities, and bare them in his Body on the Tree. When the Bread is given you; underſtand what a gift of God, Chriſt is. When you take the Bread into

your hands, let your Hearts be open, more fully to receive Chriſt himſelf, and to receive ſtill more from him. And when you eat the Bread, be ſure to feed upon Chriſt the Bread of Life by Faith. Rely upon his Crucifixion, as your reconciliation; for, ſays the Apoſtle, *We are reconciled to God by the Death of his Son*, Rom 5. 10. And as Bread is the ſtaff of Life, ſo let this Bread of Life be your Souls ſtay; reſt upon Chriſt for ſpiritual life and ſtrength more and more abundantly to be given you.

When you perceive the Wine given a part from the Bread, think with your ſelves, that your *Lord's Life* was indeed, though not againſt his Will, taken from him; Body and Soul were ſeparated, though neither from the Godhead. Look beyond the Wine to the Blood of Jeſus; believe it to be *more precious than Gold that periſhes*; and that being the blood of him who is God, it can do away the greateſt guilt, and the fouleſt ſpots and ſtains of the ſins of Men. When you drink the Wine, believe the Cup of Bleſſing to be indeed the *Communion of the Blood of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 10. 16. Reſt on this Blood to juſtifie you from all things, for which the Law condemns you. Reſt on this Blood to pacifie your Conſciences and heal the Wounds which ſin has made there, to purifie and heal all the Plagues of your Hearts, to make you perfect in every good work, and to open a way for you *into the holieſt of all*, Heb. 10. 19. not only to procure

cure conſtant acceſs to the Throne of Grace, but an abundant entrance into the everlaſting Kingdom. Thus you will be helped againſt diſtraction in this Ordinance, If what is viſible to the Eye, the Heart underſtands and improves.

5. That you may be the more ſerious in this Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, remember therein you *ſolemnly renew Covenant with the God of Heaven*, you give your ſelves from your ſelves to him, and diſclaim all other Lord's and Owners, and profeſs to take him to be your *Lord* your *God*, your *Guide*, your *All*. Oh mind what you do, that you may be ſincere in doing it. God *has no pleaſure in Fools*, Eccleſ. 5. 4. who conſider not with whom they have to do; who conſider not what evil they do, when they do that which is good, after a diſtracted and deceitful manner.

In this Ordinance the Broad-Seal of Heaven is put into your hand to confirm your Faith in the New Covenant; and that you may with greater confidence expect the accompliſhment of its Promiſes. He that reſts on Chriſt, and *hungers and thirſts after righteouſneſs*, may rejoyce in this Ordinance more than a Bankrupt would do, that receives an Acquittance ſealed, of the releaſe of all his Debts, and with it a Will and Teſtament ſealed, whereby a plentiful Eſtate is made over and aſſured to him. And the Communicants ſolemnly profeſs a Reſtipulation; they tie themſelves faſter and more ſtrictly to the Lord; there is no-

thing you have, or are, but is his; Will and Heart and Thoughts are to be ever in his Service, and at his Command.

6. Be ſenſible how *dreadful guilt is contracted* when you are *guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*, and this guilt comes upon you by diſtracted, careleſs and unworthy receiving. 1 Cor. 11. 27. *Wherefore whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* The Communicant, whoſe Heart cares not how diſtracted it is, how does he *contemn the Son of God*, his *Blood and Benefits*! If he does not count them worth ſerious thinking of, ſurely he does not think them worth his thankful acceptance. How precious is the Blood of Jeſus! and what an heavy load is the guilt of ſuch Blood! 'Tis ſad not to be ſaved by the Blood of Chriſt, but much ſorer, under the guilt of it to ſink lower into Damnation. Temporal Puniſhments that are inflicted upon receiving amiſs may be terrible; but how much worſe are eternal Judgments! Oh give your Hearts into God's Hand, that he may keep and order them at the Table and afterwards; the more there is of his help in the performance, the leſs will there be of diſtraction, and of your own infirmities.

USE V. Shall be terrour unto Sinners and Hypocrites, all whoſe attendance upon God, is void of care, and *full of allowed diſtraction.* They freely grant their Hearts a liberty, and their naughty Hearts take it, to be whatever

*they*

*they pleaſe*, and to run upon whatſoever *they* have a mind to, as if the Heart-ſearchers *Eye*, had neither Sight nor Jealouſie.

1. The *Duties of ſuch* whoſe Hearts thus run away from God, are *not ſteps towards Heaven but towards Hell.* If they hear the Word of God, they underſtand it not; the *Goſpel is hid from them*, and the *God of this World blinds them*, 2 Cor. 4. 34. If they attain to ſome kind of knowledge of the truth, they hold it in unrighteouſneſs. Sin grows ſtronger by their very Duties; its power not at all impaired by them; for thinking by their Duties to make ſome amends for their ſins, they are the more emboldned to commit iniquity: When they have done their heartleſs Services; God is the more angry with them. Thus the *Jews* of old chuſing their own ways, and their Souls delighting in their Abominations, and having no delight in God, or in his ways, the hatefulneſs of their Sacrifices is thus expreſſed, Iſa. 66. 3. *He that killeth an Oxe is as if he ſlew a Man; he that ſacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dogs Neck: He that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swines Blood: he that burneth incenſe, as if he bleſſed an idol.* Not only by impenitency and hardneſs of Heart, but by heartleſs Duties, the performers of them treaſure up unto themſelves Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath.

2. When *terrible Calamities force ſinners to cry with ſome earneſtneſs, for relief, their Cries may be altogether in vain.* God may juſtly be as heedleſs of them in their diſtreſs, as they were

were impiouſly heedleſs of him in their Devotions. Thus he threatens, when *diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon them*, then *ſhall they call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early but they ſhall not find me*; nay, which is worſe, he ſays, *I will laugh at their calamity, I will mock when their fear cometh*, Prov. 1.26, 27, 28. They deſerve to be mockt at in their *miſery*; all whoſe Duties were a mocking of God to his very face. The Prophet ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe, Zach. 7. 13. *Therefore it is come to paſs, that as he cryed, and they would not hear, ſo they cryed, and I would not hear, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

And if he be deaf many times to ſinners cries on Earth, and will afford them no help: Certainly *in Hell he will be utterly regardleſs of their Miſeries.* No Prayers are heard, no Petitions are granted that come from that place of wo, *Luk.* 16. 24. 27.

3. When Sinners and Hypocrites are in Hell, what bitter Reflections will they have upon their *Diſtractions and Negligencies* in the Service of God here on Earth! How terribly will Conſcience reproach and laſh them, becauſe *in their Day they knew not the things that concerned their Peace*! Moſt *wretched and ſelf-deſtroy'd Fools*, Conſcience will call them; becauſe it was no *more in their Thoughts* to *fear and eſcape eternal vengeance*; becauſe they were ſo *eager after things on Earth*, which now can be enjoyed no more; as to neglect the *everlaſting bliſs and glory* of the *Heavenly Kingdom!* They that will not do their *Duty*

to

to God now without diſtraction, ſhall be *forced without diſtraction to think of their miſery to eternity.* The *greatneſs of their woe,* will *immoveable fix their Thoughts upon it.* When a Sinner in outer darkneſs, ſhall thus reflect upon himſelf, and his unconceivable deplorable and deſperate caſe: Oh *what flames, what terrours and agonies do I ſuffer! What poyſoned Arrows of the Almighty are within me!* How *glorious is his power in my deſtruction!* How *righteous though intolerable is his Indignation!* And *what I do ſuffer, I muſt ſuffer without any hope at all of any eaſe or end!* The undiſtracted thinking of all this, cannot but make *Hell to be out of meaſure helliſh.* Knowing now the terrours of the Lord, let all be perſwaded to take heed of trifling with an holy and jealous God, and of doing his Work negligently, who will ſo ſeverely puniſh all evil, ſlothful, and unprofitable Servants!

USE VI. Shall be of encouragement and comfort to Believers, who would fain do more and better than they do, and with *leſs diſtraction ſerve the Lord.* They ſhould indeed go with a low Sail, becauſe of their leaky hearts, which are ſo born down and hindred by indwelling ſin, when they are attending upon God, and yet that they may not be quite caſt down, let their Eye be upon theſe grounds of Conſolation.

1. Let the Saints know that 'tis *from that Grace which is within them,* that their *Diſtractions are burthenſome to them.* As it is by the ſoftneſs

ſoftneſs of the Heart, that the remaining hardneſs of it is felt: ſo it is by the Grace in the Heart, that its Wandrings are perceived; and being perceived become matter of trouble. The Apoſtle ſpeaks by way of encouragement, 1 Cor. 10. 13. *There hath no temptation taken you, but ſuch as common.* So ſay I: Thy Diſtraction which is thy burthen, is ſo far from proving thou haſt no Grace; that 'tis common to all gracious Souls, while Militant in this World: and 'tis part of their Militancy to be conflicting with diſtracted Thoughts; and the ſtronger they grow, in this conflict, they are the more ſucceſsful. God has the renewed Will, it conſents *to the Law of God that it is good*, and deſires more undiſtractedly and with delight to do whatever is required; 'tis only remaining Fleſh that is otherwiſe inclined. The Apoſtles Reflection upon himſelf and what he did, was not altogether without comfort, Rom 7. 25. *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; ſo then with the Mind I my ſelf ſerve the Law of God, but with the Fleſh the Law of Sin.*

2. God will not *impute thoſe Diſtractions* to Believers which they *deſire ſo truly and earneſtly to be freed from.* 'Tis a good Rule, *Non imputantur, ſi violenter importantur.* They are not imputed if they are violently brought into the Heart, and their ſtay and abode there is not allowed of. The Man that labours under the Palſie, his Head his Hands do ſhake againſt his Will, he does not ſhake either himſelf, but wiſhes both were more ſteddy. The

Saints

Saints Diſtractions are againſt their Wills, they do not willingly diſtract themſelves; the Lord does not call them Hypocrites for theſe, and they miſcal, if they call themſelves by that Name, becauſe their Hearts do ſometimes ſtart away from Duty againſt the Will and Purpoſe of them. What Saint on Earth could ſtand, if God ſhould mark ſuch iniquities and miſcarriages as theſe! *Pſal.* 130. 3.

3. Chriſt's *Satisfaction and Interceſſion*, may comfort Believers under *their Diſtractions and all their Infirmities*. Our Lord by ſuffering Death has made compleat ſatisfaction, as for their other Iniquities, ſo for the ſins of their holy things. God is ſo well pleaſed in the Son of his Love, that very faulty and imperfect Duties being by him preſented, are well taken. Oh what a difference is there between a Duty as it comes from us, and as it has its defects covered with Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, and is ſo preſented to the Father! The Apoſtle tells us of the *Glory of the Grace of God, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. When Chriſt was upon Earth, the ſatisfaction he made was ſufficient to make reconciliation for all ſins and defects. And now he is in Heaven he ceaſes not to intercede for Believers; a thouſand faults may be found in their beſt Duties, but how abſolutely faultleſs and prevailing is this Interceſſion of their Advocate!

4. Many of *thoſe Duties*, which *doubting Saints* have thought to be *nothing but Sin* and *Diſtraction*; God ſees and owns the actings of Grace

Grace in. He ſees ſome Fire in the ſmoaking Flax, which he will not quench, though there is much that is offenſive with it; he ſees ſome greenneſs in the bruiſed Reed, though there is much that is dead, and *he will not break it*, Matt. 12. 20. His *Eyelids try the Children of Men*, and he has a gracious regard to the actings of Grace and Faith, though it be but as *a grain of Muſtard ſeed*. Chriſt Jeſus is ſaid to be *quick of underſtanding in the fear of the Lord*, Iſa. 11. 3. He knows what Key will open every Heart, and when he will open, none can keep ſhut; he can bring the moſt fearleſs and ſtupid, to the fear of God. And where the fear of God is in truth, though it be in a lower degree, he eaſily diſcerns it. When a Well of Water is muddy at the top, there is purer Water working up from the Spring at the bottom: When the Heart is very much diſcompoſed and diſtracted in Duty; if under all theſe Infirmities there is a working and ſtirring of the Grace of God, he will both obſerve and be well pleaſed with it. He will not utterly reject a Duty, when there is an hearty deſire to do it well, and an hearty grief 'tis done no better.

5. The Lord is ready to give a Bleſſing to thoſe means which himſelf has appointed for the *cure of theſe Diſtractions*. Theſe means are effectual when the Spirit makes them ſo. And *is the Spirit of the Lord ſtraitned?* Mic. 2. 7. What infirmity is too great for him to help? What Heart too roving and unruly for him to ſettle? The means muſt be uſed, *Cry*

*for*

*for help* that you *may be helpt to cry*; hear the word with a deſire to feel its power; that you may hear it to better purpoſe. Take encouragement from the mighty Spirit who is ſo ready to accompany *God's* Inſtitutions. He can fit you for your Duty, and fix your Hearts in it, and crown the doing of it with the Bleſſings which are promiſed. And when *your Hearts* are fixed, 'tis but reaſon *your* Mouths ſhould ſing and give praiſe.

6. When Militant Saints come to be triumphant, their *Diſtractions and Complaints becauſe of them, will be at a perpetual end.* In Heaven they ſhall be out of Satan's reach he ſhall reſiſt them no more; this World *they* will have left, which ſo often troubled both their *heads* and *hearts*, and will have exchanged it for a World that's *infinitely better*; their perfected Spirits, will be perfect in their Operations; nothing of imperfection will cleave to what the glorified Saints above are doing. The Viſion of God Face to Face, will fix the Mind and Thoughts upon him *eternally*; having once looked on, *they* will never care to look off more. *Perfection of Holineſs, Love, Delight and Joy*, muſt needs for ever hinder all even the leaſt wandring. None can in the leaſt be weary of the Work that is done in *Heaven*, it is ſo full of pleaſure, Rev. 4.8. *They reſt not Day and Night, ſaying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty which was, and is, and is to come*; and full glad may *they* well be, that ſuch a pleaſant *Employment* muſt never come to an end.

If all this Congregation, with their Paſtour can but get ſafe *into the Houſe not made with Hands eternal in the Heavens.* Oh what Thoughts and Apprehenſions ſhall we have! How ſhall we be fill'd with *Joy and Wonder*, at what we ſhall then behold! Being entred and ſwallowed up in the *Joy of our Lord*, ſhall we not then cry out. *Ah! Ah! What a difference is there between this Heavenly Country*, and the moſt deſirable *earthly Inheritance!* The *Sun is but a ſmall Spark to that Light which we now ſee! When we lookt upward, we admired Heavens outſide*, the *Firmament* with all its ſhining Luminaries, *but now we plainly ſee that Heaven is much more* glorious within! *What an excellent Society is this* innumerable Company of Angels *that we are among! How does every glorified Saint and Member of Chriſt* reſemble his Head! *being* all fair and no ſpot remaining! *How pleaſant is the Harmony where there is no Sin, no Sorrow, no Defect, or Diſcord! Theſe* Hallelujahs *which we now joyn in, how raviſhing and tranſporting are they! not like the diſtracted Services which we uſed to perform together in the Sanctuary! We are all now* fixt *in this* glorious place, *and ſhall* go no more out. *Our Complaints are quite ended, and never again ſhall we do in the leaſt amiſs! We are indeed* without fault before the Throne of God, *and we ſhall Live and Reign, Triumph and Magnifie the Lord for ever!*

Thus

Thus have I finished my Discourse concerning Distraction in attending upon God, a fault whereof all are guilty; most make nothing, or very light of; and very few mind to have it mended: My design herein has been to do some Service to the Church of *Christ*, that their Worship may be more pure and Spiritual, being freed from those wandring Thoughts which both distract and defile it; and that the Best of Lords may still have better and more acceptable Service, from all of you, and from my self also. Whilst we are in this World, truly this World is too much in us; 'tis suitable to our Senses, and apt to intice and draw away our Hearts. Let the Eye of Faith pierce through the Clouds, and see Heavens *Joy* and *Glory*, and then this Worlds Vanity will be the more apparent; and how vain a thing 'tis for you to be so *thoughtful* about it, and eager after it. When Faith has seen *how God is attended upon* by Saints and Angels above, it may help to kindle in you an *holy zeal* and a vehement desire, *more to resemble* those excellent Attendants, and to serve the Lord more gladly and seriously here below.

Oh cry to have the Cure of Distractions carried on further towards compleatness. Live as Strangers and Sojourners here on Earth, not concerned about the things of it, as others are. Declare plainly that you are born from above, and let your Hearts and Thoughts more and more ascend thither. Carry your

ſelves as *fellow-Citizens with the Saints*, and as thoſe that are of the *Houſhold of God*. Let there be more of *God*, more of *Grace* in all you do and ſpeak; in all the Powers of your Souls, in all the Duties you perform. And think with gladneſs and longing of that bleſſed Inheritance; when you ſhall be fully deliver'd from Sin and Death, and all deadneſs and diſtruction in Mind and Heart. Everlaſting Reſt muſt needs eternally exclude whatever does *now trouble you*. And how *perfectly healed*, and every way perfect in Holineſs and Joy will you be, when you have attained to the *Glorious Liberty of the Sons of God!*

*FINIS.*

## *HERBERT*'s Poem, called *Giddineſs*, pag. 119.

*OH what a thing is Man! How far from Power,*
*From ſettled Peace and Reſt!*
*He is ſome twenty ſev'ral Men at leaſt*
*Each ſev'ral Hour.*

*One while he counts of Heaven as of his Treaſure,*
*But then a Thought creeps in,*
*And calls him Coward, who for fear of ſin,*
*Will loſe a Pleaſure.*

*Oh what a Sight were Man, if his Attires,*
*Did alter with his Mind!*
*And like a Dolphins Skin, his Cloaths combin'd,*
*With his Deſires.*

*Surely if each one ſaw another's Heart,*
*There would be no Commerce;*
*No Sale or Bargain paſs, all would diſperſe,*
*And live apart.*

*Lord mend or rather make us! One Creation*
*Will not ſuffice our turn;*
*Except thou make us daily, we ſhall ſpurn*
*Our own Salvation.*

Another

## Another Poem of the same Author, called, *The Method*, pag. 126.

*POOR Heart lament!*
*For since thy God refuseth still,*
*There is some Rub, some Discontent*
*Which cools his Will.*

*Thy Father* could
*Quickly effect what thou dost move;*
*For he is* Power, *and sure he* would
*For his* Love.

*Go search this thing,*
*Tumble thy Breast, and turn thy Book;*
*If thou hadst Lost a Glove or Ring,*
*Wouldst thou not look?*

*What do I see*
*Written above thee?* Yesterday
I did behave me carelesly
When I did pray.

*And should God's Ear,*
*To such Indifferents chained be,*
*Who do not their own motions hear;*
*In God less free?*

*But ſtay, What's there?*
Late when I would have ſomething done,
I had a Motion to forbear,
Yet I went on.

*And ſhould God's Ear*
*Which needs not Man; be ty'd to thoſe*
*Who hear not him, but quickly hear*
*His utter Foes?*

*Then once more pray;*
*Up with thy Heart, as well as Voice,*
*Seek Pardon firſt, and God will ſay,*
Glad Heart rejoyce.

*FINIS:*

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## ERRATA.

PAge 27. line 4. for *heard* read *Heart.* p. 83. l. 6. for *hoc* r. *hæc.* p. 122. l. 18. for *find* r. *to find.* p. 141. l. 20, for *can* r. *do.* p. 163. l. 6. for *Man* r. *Men,* and l. 8. for *cimmandeth* r. *commendeth.* p. 171. l. 30. after *of* add *if.* p. 173. l. 23, 24. foa *Saviour* r. *Savour.* p. 253. l. 6. for *unconceivable* r. *unconceivably.*

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